DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 805 CG 025 128

AUTHOR	Cohen, Michael J.
TITLE	Well Mind, Well Earth: 97 Environmentally Sensitive Activities for Stress Management, Spirit and Self-Esteem. Continuing Education Training Manual: Environmental Education Ethics and Counseling Psychology.
INSTITUTION	World Peace Univ., Eugene, OR.
PUB DATE	Aug 93
NOTE	142p.; For the companion volume "Connecting with Nature," see ED 315 296.
AVAILABLE FROM	Project NatureConnect, The World Peace University, Box 4112, Roche Harbor, WA 98250. Well Mind, Well Earth/Connecting with Nature manual sets are sold in bulk at reduced costs.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Counseling; *Environmental Education; *Ethics; *Outdoor Activities; Psychology; *Self Esteem; *Stress Management; Stress Variables
IDENTIFIERS	*Nature

ABSTRACT

This document presents an environmental/ethics and counseling psychology training manual. An introductory preview for the manual includes "Green in Green: A study of disconnection, its implications and rectification" by Michael J. Cohen. This preview describes a study that helps readers to identify their natural old-brain as well as their culturally trained new-brain ways of knowing. The study contains a sampling of "Well Mind, Well Earth" nature-connecting activities. The manual itself presents activities and concepts from many areas of modern life. In order to help the reader beneficially become more integrated and balanced, it incorporates and unifies interdisciplinary and cross-cultural experiences. It offers 90 days of unique personal experiences, activities, and concepts that catalyze responsible growth and change through participatory contact with the natural world. The first five chapters are included under Section I, The War for Peace of Mind. Nine chapters are contained in Section II, Feelings are Facts, and an additional nine chapters are presented in Section III, Connecting With Us. Section IV, The Disconnectors, contains three chapters on alienation, prejudice against nature, and nature abandoned. Section V, Empowering Us, includes chapters on strengthening natural senses, fulfillment, and liferaft. Section VI contains four chapters on Interpretation, Theory, and Potential. The final section of the guide contains the appendices. Included are references, a brief description of The World Peace University, a summary of Project NatureConnect, and a form to obtain further information. (NB)

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ED 364 805

Well Mind, Well Earth

97 Environmentally Sensitive Activities for Stress Management, Spirit and Self-Esteem

Michael J. Cohen, Ed.D.

CONTINUING EDUCATION TRAINING MANUAL

Environmental Education/Ethics

Counseling Psychology

1994 Edition
World Peace University Press

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Well Mind, Well Earth

"It works, it moves participants. I see significant improvement in their self-esteem and value. They bond to a unity outside themselves that is actually a truth within themselves."*

✦ ✦ ✦

"What a wonderful discovery. This new sensory literacy puts into words, feelings I've had since I was a kid. It gives a voice to nature's wholeness and spirit within and around me."

✦ ✦ ✦

"As energies from my natural attractions empowered me, my restoration increased. This program not only added new dimensions to each of the twelve steps, it became a thirteenth step for me."

Well Mind, Well Earth is an Environmental Education/Ethics and Counseling Psychology training manual designed for use in conjunction with our nature interpretation activity book: The World Peace University Field Guide to *Connecting With Nature: Creating Moments That Let Earth Teach.* The activity identification numerals that appear in this manual correspond to those in the 1990 edition of *Connecting With Nature.*

*Quotes from anonymous evaluations by workshop participants

Regarding Book Sales:

Financial Assistance: The sale of *Well Mind, Well Earth* helps to fund the Dare to Recover Your Nature outreach training programs at World Peace University. We encourage individuals whose budget precludes the purchase of this publication to submit a request indicating the amount of financial assistance they need in order to purchase the book.

Money Back Guarantee: Because its activities have proven effective, *Well Mind, Well Earth* comes with a money back guarantee. Sincerely commit yourself to this training manual's prescribed program described in its instructions. Upon completing it, if you find it has made no difference in your wholeness,, simply return the book with a letter to that effect and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. $20.00 of your purchase price will be refunded.

Well Mind, Well Earth /Connecting With Nature manual sets are sold in bulk at reduced costs. A free 1-day training workshop anywhere in the U.S.A. is available with the pre-purchase of 120 sets at list price.

INTRODUCTORY PREVIEW FOR *WELL MIND, WELL EARTH*

Green in Green: A study of disconnection, its implications and rectification

MICHAEL J. COHEN, Ed.D.
The World Peace University

SYNOPSIS: One hundred and fifty years ago Henry David Thoreau observed that the natural world is "A civilization other than our own." Today, scientific evidence shows that each of us is part of nature's civilized,ever changing perfection. It also shows that we teach ourselves to violate that civilization, and therefore ourselves.

Personally, socially and environmentally, our problems result from the difference between the process that we and the natural environment use for building responsible relationships. Our logic emphasizes educating ourselves to think and relate through the use of language, -abstract words, symbols and images, while the natural world achieves its perfection through sensory, non-language communication. This difference disconnects us from nature's ways within and about us. It prevents us from enjoying (enjoining) nature's wisdom.

We will never teach the natural world to speak English and tell us its knowledge. To learn how nature works we developed revolutionary, sensory, non-verbal, nature connection techniques. By activating a person's critical thinking while they are in any natural area -backyard, park or back country- our award winning educational methods and materials enable people to thoughtfully, sentiently re-connect their inner nature and the natural world. The connection lets nature's self-organizing, regenerative civilization function within individuals of any age. It reverses apathy, dysfunction and dependency. It motivates and responsibly guides academics, stress management and self-esteem. Not surprisingly, truly civilized relationships result.

Through a series of questions, the reader as well as participants in this study identify their natural old-brain as well as their culturally trained new-brain ways of knowing. When given an exercise that challenges them to bring to consciousness their inner nature, they experience conflicts and stress. Both disappear when language is introduced that correctly identifies and brings into awareness the sensory signals from their inner nature. The study examines its implications and contains a sampling of Well Mind, Well Earth nature-connecting activities.

Many researchers validate that a human being's inner nature consists of multiple senses. At least 53 different natural senses in people have been identified (Cohen 1993, 1993A ,Sensory 1992). They include senses like sight, color, thirst, nurturing,, place, community, motion, language, reason, consciousness and touch., Aspects of each sense pervade the natural world,. In the Fall of 1992, we conducted a study of 62 Washington State residents of differing occupations, ages 16-51. Its object was to determine if we could model the long term effects of assigning cultural symbols to a person's natural sensory experiences.

We invite the reader to participate in this study. To do so, from your own memories and thinking, respond to the study's questions and exercises as well as to the participant's responses included here.

Part One

1. Answer the following question from your own experience if possible, or otherwise from your best thinking about the question.

Question: *When did you first learn the color Green?* If you can't remember the specific incident write when and/or how you think you or other people learned the color Green. Write your response here:

Participants responses fall into two main categories. Here and throughout the remainder of this study, place a check mark next to the responses below with which you agree, write in your own additional response, and react to the responses listed:

A. Some participants remember when they learned to associate the word *green* with their green color sensation,, thereby knowing green by its *name or label* :

( ) "My parents told me that the name for the color of the grass and trees was *green.*" ( ) "I learned green when I learned the names of crayons." ( ) "I learned green by using coloring books, and from my teacher."

B. Some participants recognized that they naturally knew green (greenness) as a sense or sensation at birth or before:
( ) "I was born knowing green." ( ) "I remember that I could sense and distinguish the green grass from the blue sky even though I didn't know the names of their colors." ( ) "My parents didn't teach me to know green, I inherited that ability from nature or God." ( ) "Green is part of my inherent sensitivity to color." ( ) "My biological attributes include the ability to register green and many other colors. Many other forms of life, including insects and microorganisms also have this ability." ( ) "Green usually signals food and aliveness. It's the color of chlorophyll. I know it genetically." ( ) "Knowing green is part of my inner nature, even a newborn infant knows green."

From these responses we recognize there are at least two ways that we believe we "know" the color green:
A.. The biological, inborn natural color sense (sensitivity) to green (greenness)
B.. The word-symbol *green* which labels that sensitivity.

2. Three participants had unique responses to the question that deserve attention.
A. When Carol was an infant learning to talk, her father used her as an experiment. He purposely taught her that the name for the color green was *orange* and the name for orange was *green.* Today she is 34 years old and still gets confused when naming these colors. She still tends to call orange *green* and green *orange.* Carol often "thinks about" and "figures out" the correct terms for these colors rather than automatically knowing them.

B. As a child, Mary Ann learned the colors red and green together as "Christmas colors". Today, at age 31, she still gets them mixed up and has difficulty calling each of them by their right name.

C. John was dyslexic as a child. He was told that he was color blind because he could not properly name the colors he saw. In actuality, he believes that he could distinguish the difference in the colors, but he had trouble applying the right words to them.

Participants' responses to A, B and C:

( )"I'd feel stupid if I couldn't tell red from green, how does it make you feel?" ( )"It's fascinating that after all these years you still have the problem. Does it affect you?" ( )"It shows how strong our bonds to words can be and how difficult it is to break them." ( )"I have a similar problem identifying my left from my right, when I'm stressed I have no idea which is which."

Question: *What do you think and feel about the color Green?* Responses ( )"It's the grass, the first color I remember seeing as a child." ( )"I love it." ( )" It makes me feel alive, like springtime." "It's the color of chlorophyll, of life as we know it." ( )"I feel joy when I see it or think about it." ( )"It's the vitality of trees , mountains and fresh air." ( )"It gives me a rush, a strong feeling of aliveness" ( )" Green is the color of nature. I have a sacred feeling about it." ( ) "It conveys time to me, three billion years ago green algae flourished in the ocean." ( )"I makes me feel like I'm home." ( )"Green is beautiful, its wilderness, the spirit of natural life."

From early in our lives, our formal and informal education conditions us to bring the world into our awareness (consciousness) by labeling it with language abstractions -words, symbols and images- and knowing the meanings of these abstractions. Usually two different natural sense groups lying in two different parts of the brain (see figure 1) are at work when we "know" something natural like the color green (Samples 1976):

1. Our natural *sense of color* lying in the large, anciently evolved "old-brain" enables us to *experience color as a unlabeled sensation or feeling.* The old-brain registers non-language tensions, sensations, feelings and emotions It makes up approximately 87% of the brain and is the home of 51 sense groups including color, touch, taste, smell, temperature, thirst, nurturing, belonging and many other natural sensations. Most of our old brain sensitivities we inherit from and share with the plant and animal kingdoms (Cohen, 1993, Sensory 1992, Murchie 1978). In the natural environment they provide a non-languaged, interspecies communion. It permits natural systems to organize, preserve and regenerate themselves without producing garbage, war, or insanity.

2, Our senses of *language* and *reason* lie in our smaller, more recently evolved, "new-brain (cerebral cortex)." It knows greenness as *the correct word or label* (like the word "green") *for sensory experiences.* The new-brain makes up about 13% of the brain. It creates, experiences and processes culturally trained language arts such as words, numbers, symbols , logic, abstractions and stories.

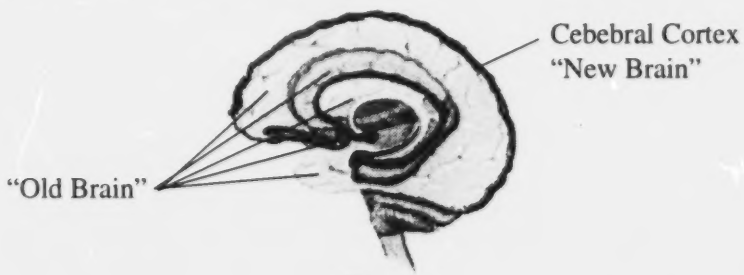


Figure 1

Summary of Part One.

1. By the time we are born, the ancient *sense of color,* lying in the old-brain, enables us to naturally register green color as a sensation. This sense experiences green directly as "greenness", as a non-language, unadulterated, unedited, unmediated sensation/feeling. The old brain brings to awareness how we feel and is often called our *inner nature, inner self* or *inner child.* When we operate from old brain signals we say we are being *emotional, sensitive, childish, feelingful, or subjective.*

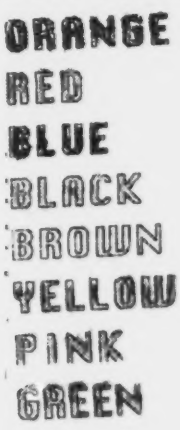
2. In the more recently evolved new-brain, the senses of *language* and *reason* are trained (educated) to apply cultural words, labels or stories to the natural senses. We teach the new brain that it is reasonable to know greenness as the written or spoken word *green,* or *verde* (Spanish) or *vert* (French) or other words in different languages. The senses of language and reason mostly lie in the cerebral cortex. When we operate from them we are being *literate, cerebral, sensible, abstract, cognitive, educated , academic* , or *thoughtful.*

Our cultural upbringing emphasizes and super-trains us to rely on our new brain *reasoning* and *language* senses and the stories they create. People that use these senses and stories well are considered educated and intelligent. They often become leaders. People who use these senses poorly are often considered illiterate , stupid or emotionally disturbed. Notice that by this definition, in the new-brain stories of our culture's adult world an infant and its natural sensate/ feeling intelligence could be considered "illiterate, stupid and uncivilized" for it has not been culturally trained to excellently relate through its senses of *language* and *reasoning*. However, Carl Jung and many others note that our natural sensations and feelings are not only reasonable, they are as discriminating, logical and consistent as abstract thinking.

Part Two

We asked each of the 62 participants to call upon their *inner nature,* their inborn, non-language, inherent sense of color, to express itself, to do its natural "inner child" thing. To accomplish this we asked them to have their new-brain reasonably call upon their inner nature, their old-brain, and report in language what their inner nature sensed .

The vehicle we used for this purpose is the list of color names found in figure 2. The words naming the colors were written in different colors inks (for example, the word "green" was written in red ink). Use Figure 1 as follows: *Quickly* go down the color chart list and say aloud the ink colors, not the color names. For example, the first color is red, not orange.



-color in with red ink
-color in with purple ink
-color in with black ink
-color in with blue ink
-color in with yellow ink
-color in with green ink
-color in with orange ink
-color in with green ink

Figure 2

As a control for this task, we asked participants to quickly identify blocks of identical ink colors that we painted on a separate page. When using figure 1, although every participant, except one, had no difficulty identifying blocks of colors, all participants, with two exceptions, had difficulty quickly identifying the ink colors when they spelled out words. The overwhelming tendency was for participant's new-brain *culturally trained sense of language* to dominate and, out of habit, read the colors *as words* rather than as *colors.* In addition, when doing this activity quickly, over 40% of the participants spoke a written *color name* aloud but actually believed they had said the *ink color.* For example, in the fifth item in figure 2, Paul believed he had read the ink color correctly even though he said the word *"brown"* while seeing the color yellow. If another person had had not been with him and caught the the error, Paul would not have known that he made it. It's similar to you, the reader, perhaps not noticing that the words "the" and "had" were doubled in the previous sentence until I now alert you to this fact. The difference is that Paul lost awareness of a vital inherant sensory signal from his inner nature, not simply a typographical error .

Participants reactions to this exercise included:

( )"The color chart experience captured how our new-brain language/reasoning training tends to overwhelm natural aspects of ourselves." ( )"My habitual dependency on using words buried my sensory inner child. I had trouble expressing my natural ability to recognize green in a non-language way." ( )"When I use inaccurate words, I lose contact with an important natural part of myself and it gives me conflicts. ( )"I feel uneasy about my ability to concentrate and be accurate" ( )"I can't believe how I saw the color black and without even knowing I did it, I said the word blue instead." ( )"The exercise makes me realize how important it is for me to consciously make room for my natural non-language way of knowing and for other people's observations of me." ( )"It brought to mind that Nature within and about me is a non-language experience."

Reactions from the two persons who experienced little difficulty with this activity were:

( )"Through years of therapeutic meditation, I have learned to be able to concentrate on what I sense non-verbally and to disregard the language-thinking signals in my mind." ( )"I have been diagnosed as a person who does not pay attention to what I sense or feel. I mostly work from what words say to me. In this exercise, the instructors told me to say the ink colors, so I did. "

When we asked the other participants why their inner nature had difficulty doing this simple task, they concluded that from early in their lives they learned or been "trained," "conditioned" "programmed" or "educated" to read and value words, not colors. They observed that their new brain *language and reasoning* had been so habituated to register and express words and ideas that now it automatically "mediated," "edited" "devalued" "buried" or "overshadowed" their awareness and expression of sensory signals from their inner nature. For this reason they had to work at unburying them. Most participants expressed some anxiety about having this habit without knowing they had it. Most showed genuine concern that they had, to some extent, lost the power to experience and express their inner nature when they wanted to.

Participants seemed unaware that a cause of their inability to express their inner nature is that the average American spends over 95% of his or her life indoors, disconnected from nature's ways. We spend almost 18,000 critical developmental childhood hours in classrooms alone. Collectively, we spend less than one day per person per lifetime in tune with the non-language natural world. We live over 98% of our nature-estranged adult lives abstractly knowing the natural world through detached new-brain *stories about it* rather than through intimate *enjoyment of it.* Our estrangement from nature restricts our natural connections from growing and strengthening. It disconnects us from a world of everchanging perfection that Thoreau observed to be "A civilization other than our own."

Many participants attributed their personal anxieties, stress and conflicts to result from their learned inhibitions about communicating their natural senses and feelings. They said they learned to feel anxiety about their true inner nature feelings, their deep ideals and values. Their natural wants, sensations and feelings often seemed out of step with parent's and teacher's new-brain stories such as "expectations, "norms" "excellence" "maturity" "responsibilities" and "reality." Many participants recognized that they internalized these authorities in their mentality and felt stress from these internalizations. Left unattended, such stress produces disease and dysfunction.

Participants never experienced "difficulty," "tension," "conflict" or "stress" on the last word on the list, the word *green* written in green ink. In all cases, "Green" written in green ink felt different than did the other color words. In addition, when the chart was turned upside down, the written words became less legible and less difficulty was encountered in identifying the ink colors. Obviously, non-English speaking people and illiterates would have little difficulty saying the ink colors.

Summary of Part 2

Our sensations and feelings are facts. Our inherent old-brain natural senses are as real as rocks, oceans and gravity. Reading the names of colors written in inks of a different color discloses that often, without our knowledge, society stringently trains and programs our new-brain language and reasoning senses to the point that they override our other inherent inner nature callings and hide them from our awareness. This change-resistant, irritating subconscious

process produces feelings of disconnectedness and inner stress whose source we may not see or understand.

Teaching our new-brain to reasonably take the time to acknowledge our natural senses brings our inner nature and its natural connectedness (*Green* in green) into awareness. The process awakens good natural feelings, reduces inner conflict, and unifies our relationships with the natural world and its workings.

Overview

Participant's reactions to the whole exercise were: ( )"I learned that I've been conditioned to overlook the expression of my inner self." ( )"My upbringing estranged me from nature." ( )"After more than three decades of exposure to the correct names for colors, Carol and Mary Ann still had difficulty applying them. It shows just how deeply we bond to our words, stories and beliefs and how difficult it is to change our programming." ( )"What I inherently sense in a non-languaged way is as important and true as what I've been taught, yet I've been trained to overlook it" ( )"The comfort of *Green* written in green ink exemplifies a value of calling our inner nature by its right name. Doing so sustains our inner harmony." ( )"I feel frustrated. It helped me see how stress can arise between our inner nature and our language stories, especially when the stories seem accurate." ( )"We value and emphasize learning and communicating through language, not what we naturally sense and feel." ( )"My senses and feelings are facts." ( )"The exercise let me see just how much my upbringing has disconnected me from my inner nature" ( )"It helped me differentiate my language and thoughts from my sensations and feelings." ( )"If I only know things through language and reasoning, I can become estranged from enjoying the aliveness and beauty of greenness, of nature within me and around me." ( )"The exercise is significant because it shows that not only do we learn to overwhelm or bury our inner nature with words and concepts, but we do it without even realizing it. It's frightening because since we do it without knowing it, we can't express our true inner nature even if we want to."

This study suggests that our culturally trained, language dominated, new-brain way of knowing tends to stress us when it overrides or demeans our inherent inner nature (the little child within us). Excessively emphasizing our new-brain functions separates our awareness from natural values and wisdom that lies in our inherent, sensory old-brain attributes and it the natural world. These values include the natural messages, connections and enjoyment we might get from consciously, reasonably commiting ourselves to spend time seeking, seeing and enjoying the color green and other natural sensations. It makes sense to learn to teach ourselves and others how to enjoy and validate our sensory inner nature.

The study shows that a comfortable sense of wholeness prevails when new-brain language symbols correctly identify and support our inner nature (exemplified by the last color, *green* written in green ink). It insinuates that experiences which validate and strengthen "*Green* being written in green ink" could be useful in reducing personal stress and conflict.

Recommendations: The use of nature-reconnection activities.

The color chart activity is one of 97 nature-connecting activities used by counselors, educators and mental health workers to catalyze *Green* in green. The activities counteract the adverse effects of the estrangement of our 53 natural senses from the natural world. They teach the new-brain to discover, validate and respect the old-brain and its sensory connections to nature within and without (Cohen, 1993). They move participants. We see significant improvement in their self-esteem for they discover that nature's perfection outside themselves flourishes within them. The following 5 activities introduce the nature-connecting process. Note: We enhance Old-brain/new-brain learning by journaling and discussing thoughts, feelings and reactions that arise from doing the activities.

Activity 1. Natural Old-Brain Connecting: In order to strengthen your non-languaged inner nature (for example, your old-brain sense of color), go into a natural area (park, backyard, wilderness) and for five minutes minimum, without using language or reason, connect your non-languaged, sensory inner nature with the non-languaged natural world, the nurturing "mother" community where your sensory powers originated and evolved. Do this by simply sensing natural attractions there (colors, moods, textures, motions, forms, variations, touch, taste, smell, sound etc.) *without assigning terms, words or ideas to the experience.* This is old-brain connecting. If you find your mind drifts to

thoughts or to labeling the natural area, block it from doing so by repeating the word "non-language" over and over again as you sense the area..

Activity 2. Validating Natural Connecting: While doing Activity 1, if you feel the desire to label (new-brain connect) to the attractions that call to you, label the *whole natural connecting process,* not just the objects themselves. Focus on the whole of the natural attraction experience. Do this by calling each attraction *a connection experience".* For example, if a leaf attracts you, call the leaf attraction *a sensory natural connection with the leaf.* If a bird's color, motion, or song attracts you, also call it *a natural connection experience.* Other sensory terms that participants have used to describe natural attraction/sensory connections include: *loves, feelings, spirits, sensations, intuitions, bonds, callings, resonances, affinities, Higher Power, blessings, affections, natural wisdoms, joys, atmosphere, God, devas, facts, openness, etc.* Each of these sensory connection terms correctly identifies our experience (*Green* in green) when a natural attraction calls to us. The terms feelingfully bring the natural sensory connection process into new-brain language awareness rather than disregard it by singularly symbolizing the object as a noun. Labeling the natural attraction/connecting process enables the new-brain to register and validate the existence and spirit of sensory connections as well as how they feel.

Activity 3. Natural Attractions Feel Good: While in a natural area, repeat Activity 2 with the following addition: Notice that each time you sense a natural attraction it feels comfortable (enjoyable, good, nice, fun , beautiful, supportive etc.). Validate this experience and your sensory self by putting it into words (new-brain) such as "I am a person who enjoys sensing natural attractions." "Natural attractions feel good to me." Recognize that this validation is like writing *Green* in green ink.

Activity 4. Integrating: While in a natural area, read aloud the validations you wrote in Activity 3. Note that you feel comfortable reading and writing your validation; you enjoy seeing or hearing in language (new-brain) what is valid and true about your sensory inner nature (old-brain natural senses) and their connectedness to the natural world. Validate your enjoyment. When it feels comfortable and makes sense to you, write and/or say to the effect that "It feels good for my new-brain to validate my old-brain's sensory nature and its sensitivity to natural attractions." "I am aware that I gain enjoyment by letting my reasoning-language abilities validate my inner nature and its sensory connections with the natural world." These validations feel good because they are *"Green* in green." They integrate our languaged and non-languaged ways of knowing and being as well as give added value to natural areas.

Activity 5. Summarizing: Write down what for you are the three most important things you learned by doing these activities.

The two volume training manual Well Mind, Well Earth *contains an additional 92 self-guiding nature connection activities. To learn how to customize them for your personal and professional growth, see the Table of Contents and Instructions .*

Conclusions

Language-reason disconnections from the natural world and our sentient inner nature make it difficult for to fully experience and express natural feelings. For this reason, our lives may feel stressed and lackluster causing us to excessively crave nature's spirit, grandeur and peace or artificial substitutes for it. Sensory nature-connecting activities have shown to help reverse this phenomenon.

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1994 Edition

Well Mind, Well Earth

97 Environmentally Sensitive Activities for Stress Management, Spirit and Self-Esteem

Michael J. Cohen, Ed.D.

CONTINUING EDUCATION TRAINING MANUAL

Environmental Education/Ethics

Counseling Psychology

Department Of Integrated Ecology
Project NatureConnect
World Peace University

World Peace University Press

Acknowledgments

Most of this book is also found in Michael J. Cohen's Part Two of RECOVERING OUR NATURE Portions of it are from his published or forthcoming articles in the *The Science Teacher*, of the National Science Teachers Association; *The Journal of the Oregon Counseling Association; Legacy*, The Journal of The National Association for Interpretation; *The Journal of Environmental Education; The International Journal of Humanities and Peace; Adventure Education*, The Journal of the National Outdoor Education Association; *Monograph of Environmental Problem Solving*, and the *Proceedings* of the 1990 and 1991 National Conference of the North American Association For Environmental Education: *Proceedings* of the 1991 and 1992 International Conference of the Association For Experiential Education; *School Science Review*, Journal of the Association For Science Education; *Environmental Awareness*, the Journal of the International Society of Naturalists; *The Trumpeter*, Journal of Ecosophy; *Forum*, The Journal of Educators for Social Responsibility; *The Communicator*, Journal of the New York State Outdoor Education Association; *The Animals Agenda;* HOW NATURE WORKS and The World Peace University Field Guide to CONNECTING WITH NATURE. All materials outside the chapter introductions come from WELL MIND, WELL EARTH.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the reading, editing and critiques by Serena Lockwood, Daniel Levine, Ed.D; Lizabeth Francis, Ph.D.; Kenneth Bakken, M.D. D.O.; Charles Fisher, Ph.D.; Ron Slosky, Ph.D.; Richard Schneider, Ph.D.; Deborah Latham, Dwayne and Sarah Hance, Dick Foley, Steve Bobb, Richard and Barbara Stockwell, Cathy Cope, and Robert Anthony.

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Printed in the United States of America

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Introduction

World Peace University's Department of Integrated Ecology training manual *Well Mind, Well Earth* implements a spectacular contribution, an educational and environmental breakthrough. It presents hope and the opportunity for people to increase their own and their planet's well being. Dramatically, scientifically and spiritually, its 90 days of sensory explorations in natural areas offer an extraordinary addition to education, counseling and peace.

Over 50% of the American public is committed to personal counseling simply because our inner nature is deteriorating along with the natural environment. Most stress and dysfunction result from the disintegration of our natural sensitivities and immune system. *Well Mind, Well Earth* effectively addresses this problem.

From 42 years of specialized field experience, faculty members of World Peace University* have developed this manual to engage participants in a new learning process. It allows them to learn from hands-on, non-verbal experiences in nature including their and others true inner nature. It rewards participants with new truths about life relationships. Every student, child and grandchild deserves its lasting values.

My son David, who I adopted at age 4, is an Alaskan native whose genetic parents were Yupik people. Six years ago, when he was 21 years of age, I discovered that he had become an alcoholic with disastrous effects. As a loving, concerned parent, I accepted the challenge to make time and space to fully participate in a 6 month 12-step program with David in order to assist in his recovery. Neither the program nor alcoholism were strangers to me, for although I am the Chancellor of World Peace University, I also have a doctoral degree in social work and I'm the former Chief of Social Services for the Bureau Of Indian Affairs in Alaska. My master's internship was in the treatment of alcoholics. David and I are so thankful and proud that the treatment program intensified his indigenous faith in nature have kept him sober. Uniquely, *Well Mind, Well Earth* gives its participants this kind of recuperative power.

History: Since 1986, our University's Department of Integrated Ecology, Chaired by Dr. Michael J. Cohen, has developed safe, sensory nature-connecting activities, workshops and materials. The activities help people renew, restore and recover their inner child. They correctly identify it and the natural world's non-verbal wisdom as a seamless continuum.

The Process: Uniquely, *Well Mind, Well Earth* catalyzes communication between a person and their natural environment. Its activities create a nature-connected moment in which dormant, thoughtful, non-verbal ways of knowing and being awaken and play. Ensuing thoughts, feelings and understandings motivate responsible sharing and relating. The activities tap the energies and inherent balance of 43 natural senses which we ordinarily repress. They re-bond us to our inherent planetary wisdom. They restore us because sensory connections with our natural origins crystallize deep self-realization, self-respect and sanity. The activities unify our lives by letting the natural world itself identify and be a common cause. By reducing stress, they have shown to promote recovery from apathy and stress-related dysfunction, including cancer.

This training manual's processes have already been reviewed and published in no less than 35 professional journals and conference proceedings in many areas of science, education, counseling, social responsibility and spirituality. As they educate people, they help Planet Earth recover from our assault upon it, for our and its problems result from the same disturbance. The task challenges us for it addresses cultural fallacies that go back 8,000 years.

The Effects of Conquest: No God would allow us to do what we have done to ourselves and our planet. Since the beginning of our culture's history and reasoning, we have thought that our conquest of nature makes possible our personal and collective survival. However, conquest always stresses, violates and deteriorates life. Today we clearly see its destructive personal and global effects. The deterioration of an entire planet, its ozone layer, species, temperature, ecosystems, soil, water, air and people(s) results from and with our personal deterioration. Our

destruction of wholeness consists of unholy beliefs and acts which we teach ourselves. Most other species and cultures neither have them or their adverse effects..

Irrefutable observations show that our personal relationship with the natural world is like our leg's relationship to our body. We are each other. *Well Mind, Well Earth* identifies the disruptive common cause of our personal, social and environmental disorders. It shows that as our erroneous thinking conquers nature and severs us from the natural world, it painfully assaults, conquers and abandons our true inner nature, that which some call "the little child within us." We naturally dispel this emotional pain by hiding it in our subconscious mind. Our major problem is that our participation in responsible relationships collapses whenever an expectation or rejection triggers our hurt. This creates apathy which disables us. It prevents us from participating in our own lives and welfare. Too often our lives center around the limits of our disabilities rather than around responsible relationships that will heal them. Too often we study why people die rather than studying how people enjoyably stay alive by responsibly finding peace. *Well Mind, Well Earth* reverses that trend.

Natural enjoinment (enjoyment) reverses abandonment: This manual shows how to meaningfully connect with natural areas and reduce abandonment fears. It not only demonstrates how disconnecting from nature produces abandonment pain and dysfunction, it demonstrates that genuine re-connecting produces joy, sensory rejuvenation and faith in the process of receiving support from wholeness. In order to achieve personal wholeness and integrity while living on Planet Earth, one must learn to unify with the whole of Earth's natural world, the global life community and its spirit which pervades people, places and ecosystems. It is insane for us to expect to solve our problems without addressing our physical and emotional estrangement from our biological and spiritual origins.

Seldom do we think of bonding to the natural world as an imperative for wholeness. Most of us don't know how to incorporate such bonding in our personal or professional relationships. Yet we do know that strong bonds to the natural environment catalyze environmentally and socially responsible societies and individuals. It is always the inherent bonds of dedication, love and passion for all of life that motivate and guide people(s) to support the natural world and each other. These bonds awaken deep feelings from people's inner nature, feelings that support every aspect of a person and their environment's well being. World wide, over and over again we see that disconnecting these connections disintegrates responsible people(s) and their environment.

The activities in *Well Mind, Well Earth* are the work of Dr. Michael J. Cohen, a gifted, award-winning, author and educator. They result from his three decades of environmentally sensitive teaching and research while living in natural settings. The activities make becoming more whole a personal and collective reality. They rejuvenate emotional balance and immune systems by relieving them of excessive stress from within and without.

Fulfill Natural Attractions: Connecting with natural attractions catalyzes passion for lasting mental, physical and environmental health. It empowers every step towards wholeness, as well as an extra final step. The final step connects people to support from and for the health of a safe, immediate environment and peaceful Planet, rather than from the dangerous entrapments of our society. We know from experience that we can't truly connect with the natural world because it neither speaks nor understands English. But this training program shows how to learn nature's "language" and wisdom. Some call the process scientific, others deem it psychological or spiritual. No matter it's label, many of us may never reach the 21st century without it.

Healthy fulfillments always unify, feel better and are more attractive than destructive ones. This manual empowers us to let natural areas catalyze healthy fulfillment. The process gives a priceless added value to natural areas. Participants genuinely bond to them out of love and reverence rather than from facts and figures alone. This ultimate form of education and prevention responsibly restores nature within and without. It promotes lasting cultural change for the better. I hope every reader takes it to heart. I hope you involve yourself, your colleagues and family in the exciting preventative and recuperative opportunities it presents.

Dr. F. Richard Schneider, Chancellor
World Peace University*

*See Appendix A, page 124

Instructions

Note: This manual presents activities and concepts from many areas of modern life. In order to help the reader beneficially become more integrated and balanced, it incorporates and unifies interdisciplinary and cross-cultural experiences. If you desire academic credit for what you learn from using this manual, arrange for the credit bycontacting our office before you begin the work.

Well Mind, Well Earth offers you 90 days of unique personal experiences, activities and concepts. They catalyze responsible growth and change through participatory contact with the natural world. You may use them again and again at will. The more attractive the natural object or area with which you use them, the better the activities work. The more you share them with others, the more they benefit you.

Reading this manual resembles hearing about a new, delicious medicine. The narrative tells you about possibilities: where the medicine came from, what the medicine can do and has done. The instructions and activities give you a prescription for the medicine. Finally, your commitment to fill the prescription and use the medicine determines how effective this manual will be for you. Closely follow the instructions

Well Mind, Well Earth shares the eclectic ideas of past and present workshop leaders and participants, many of whom are skilled professional people. Although this 1993 manual is complete with respect to process, it is designed as an orientation training program to its companion volume The World Peace University Field Guide to **Connecting With Nature:** *Creating Moments that Let Earth Teach* published in 1990. The latter volume offers an additional 44 activities. Note that each chapter listed in the Table of Contents offers the identifying numbers of Connectors *-not page numbers-* in **Connecting With Nature** to which each chapter has proven helpful.

This manual's chapter sequence follows the educational agenda of our introductory workshops. It teaches most logically in this sequence for it starts from basic concepts and builds on them. However, after reading the Preview, pages 1-22 and 97-100A the remaining chapters, can be done randomly

Commit yourself to following the instructions below and doing the activities offered in each chapter:

-For best results, plan on spending at least one hour total on most chapters before proceeding to the following chapter. It will take 60-90 days to thoroughly complete this manual. Whenever possible, do the chapters and activities in a natural area with one or more other people and then share your feelings and thoughts with each other.

-Do the activities in or with attractive *natural* areas, objects and feelings, not with substitutes like nature videos, recordings or descriptions. The greater the natural area's attractiveness and diversity, the greater the fulfillment you will feel. Most of these activities will work with a potted flower, pet, or garden if a natural park or sanctuary are unavailable.

-Complete chapters and their companion CWNconnectors as time permits. Leave at least 24 hours before starting a new chapter or activity. Some chapters subdivide and take as many as eight days.

-For orientation and definitions, be sure to first read the Preview and Chapters 1-5. Pay special attention to the meaning of *Us* as described in Chapter 3 and *Wrangler* as described in Chapter 5.

-In each chapter, read the opening paragraphs and then do the activities found in the box areas. As often as possible use Page 97-100A Natural Attraction Reactionaire when you experience natural sensations and feelings until it becomes a way-of-thinking habit.

-Before proceeding to each chapter's Section B, affirm and write your thoughts, feelings and reactions to the activities in the space provided in the box, at the chapter's end, or elsewhere.

Instructions for each chapter's* Section B: Participant's Reactions *paragraphs.

Do not proceed with Section B until you complete the boxed and other activities in the introductory section.

Section B of most chapters contains the reactions of previous workshop participants to the activities presented. The reactions come from a wide range of anonymous participants who range from novices to experts in many fields.[69] *Find some aspect of each reaction that explains it or makes sense to you.* Then, in the spaces provided below them, or elsewhere, in writing, respond to each reaction in **one** of the following ways:

1. Do you agree or disagree with the reaction, or with parts of it? Why?

2. Change the reaction into a question and then answer that question.

3. Add the word "because" to the reaction and then complete the statement from your point of view.

-Try to do this activity with other people, mutually share your feelings and thoughts about your reactions to Section B.

-Read the remaining portions of the chapter, and follow the Section B instructions for activities occasionally found there.

-In the space provided at the chapter's end, write the three most important things you learned from the chapter and from doing the activity. This personalizes the chapter for you. It helps you review it with respect to its usefulness to you.

-During the day(s) between chapters, apply each chapter's material to your daily life experiences. After completing Chapter 5, try to locate the past and present internal and external wranglers in your life and how they made or still make you feel. Wranglers build walls between your old-brain and new-brain

-Form a trustable, committed support group that will share and discuss the activities with you.

Each chapter is enhanced by:
-doing the chapter and activities in a natural area- backyard, park or backcountry.
-becoming profecient at using the Natural Attractions Reactionaire found on page 100A.
-time spent in non-exploitive contact with an attractive natural place or thing; a backyard, flower or pet will do.
-before going to sleep at night, asking your dream world to give you some positive insights about the chapter.
-applying the chapter's concepts to your daily life. Share them with your children and friends.
-writing a journal of your thoughts, feeling and reactions.
-writing what memories and new ideas the chapter stimulated.
-keeping track of the activities that seem most helpful and repeating them whenever you so desire.
-sharing, discussing and teaching the activities and concepts to others.
-keeping track of which activities and concepts hold special meaning for you. Develop and use them as personal rituals for as long as they continue to help. Come back to them after discontinuing them for a while.

Because the chapters are designed to be read at least one day apart from each other, to refresh your memory, some points in earlier chapters are repeated in later chapters and referrals are made to earlier chapters. If questions arise, assistance is often available from Project NatureConnect at (206) 378-6313.

An instruction guide/lesson plan for each chapter will be available from Project NatureConnect, Box 4112, Roche Harbor, WA 98250.

Section One

THE WAR FOR PEACE OF MIND

Sources of Conflict and Resolution

20

"There is a measure of conscious thought throughout the body." - **The Hippocratic Writings**

Prelude:
Integrating Ecology

July 3, 1962. Carefully avoiding the rattlesnakes that lay on the trail to absorb its warmth, we climbed high atop Bear Butte, a sacred site of many local Native Americans. Our eyes scanned the silent prairie that stretched horizon to horizon across South Dakota into Kansas and Wyoming. Below us, like a period on a blank page, a lone buffalo languidly walked across the range. Dr. Robin Blake*, the Wildlife Biologist who spent the day with us, noted that 100 years ago this scene did not consist solely of the wind blown prairie grass that we saw today. In those days it was, at times, a pounding, brown, earth-shaking sea of buffalo.

Dr. Blake explained that back in 1862, this landscape was like a living organism. Like the organs in our body, each part of it, including minerals, Native Americans, and more than 40 million buffalo, respected and contributed to its harmony. In return, they all benefited from its spirit, peace, and natural wisdom. "In that system there was more meat on the hoof here 100 years ago than the entire meat industry raises today," said Dr. Blake. "That ecosystem grew and flourished without producing garbage, pollution, war, crime or insanity. Then, our pioneer ancestors annihilated the buffalo in order to starve out the natural people and seize their land and gold. Many plant species that the buffalo aerated, fertilized and ate also disappeared. Today, we would have to simultaneously reintroduce buffalo, plants, and proper soil conditions before that ancient whole of life could return and sustain itself. It would take time, a long time, to fully regain that productive harmonic balance. However, it could be done. Interestingly, today, that living system's main ingredient for survival would be our wisdom and desire to restore it. In the final analysis, that is the only ingredient that is missing at this time," said Dr. Blake.

Dr. Blake continued: "What's fascinating is that there were no written instructions on how to sustain that ancient optimum of peace, life and diversity. Back then, an unwritten, life-loving wisdom prevailed to which every species and mineral subscribed and had access. People were managed by the wisdom and spirit of the land, they were not the managers of it. They received life-wisdom by knowing how to learn from the land, its inhabitants, and from places like this volcanic butte. All were sacred to them. Although the natural world's callings to them were non-verbal, they could still hear them. It's not a mystery how they did this. Even today, each one of us is born with the potential to hear and interpret them. We simply have no use for them so we neither nurture nor culture this ability. However, as these abilities and/or the natural world become injured, dormant or dead, we lose part of ourselves and our contact with wholeness. It becomes a personal and cultural disability."

Dr. Blake said: "Strange as it may seem, every member of the undisturbed ecosystem, including its geologic features, moment by moment gave their consent for the whole system to continue operating. The secret to sustaining peace and beauty was to continually check in with the ancient unspoken truths and relationships that pervaded the countryside. Not until we teach ourselves that science and skill, will we regain the wisdom of that wholeness. We and the environment equally suffer today simply because we've brutalized the many sensitive callings that for eons sustained perfection within and around us," Dr. Blake concluded.

✦ ✦ ✦

In 1950, I took a short course in ecology at the University of California. Ecology, I discovered, studied relationships in an attempt to learn about the effects of the whole of life on its members. Today, forty-two years later, ecology has been subdivided along with the whole of life. Pond ecology, wildlife ecology, human ecology, salt water ecology, alpine ecology, even spiritual ecology, now prevail. In order to learn how to relate to the whole of life, I now study and teach Integrated Ecology. It puts things back together again. It eclectically focuses on rejuvenating the sensory fabric, texture and biology of relationships.

My academic background never lets me feel comfortable about making the following statement but, truth to tell, *the natural world is illiterate.* It mainly achieves its natural perfection through non-verbal communication. Since we've been unsuccessful in teaching the natural world to speak English or any other language, in order to learn its wisdom we must let it teach us its non-verbal language and ways. That's not as difficult as it sounds, for, as Dr. Blake noted, nature's non-verbal communication is part of our biological inheritance. We know it at birth and before.

Integrated Ecology is a science of wholeness which includes letting Earth non-verbally speak for itself and then translating its multiple messages into our language. The basic rule of Integrated Ecology is to make authentic contact with the natural world within and/or around us, hear and validate its callings, and create the support and strength we need to fulfill whatever natural attractions and lessons we find in them. It is a safe, comforting, hands-on way of knowing that centers itself on interactive processes, consensus, community and verbalizing our non-verbal experiences with nature within and around us.

Integrated Ecology objectively searches for Mother Earth and wholeness. It relies upon responsible critical thinking that logically integrates every source of information or experience including the subjective, objective, spiritual and intercultural. It does not reject any information about the whole of life for to do so would prevent its lines of investigation from meeting their goal to understand and attain wholeness. The Integrated Ecology process is appropriate for use in educational and public institutions for it not only respects that we are "One nation under God," and "In God we trust," but, in addition, it insists that each individual be clear about the positive, neutral and/or negative experiences that these words personally hold for them. Spirituality is a component of the wholeness of our lives. We will never truly achieve wholeness and gain its peace if we ignore or reject spirit.

**Dr. Blake is a composite of several different resource people. See Chapter 4 for details.*

"Insanity is a perfectly rational adjustment to an insane world". **- R.D. Laing**

Chapter 1
The Neglected Community

The event turned out not to be a miracle after all. Rather, it was a self-empowerment tool, a repeatable, extremely beneficial scientific process that David and I could apply anytime, anywhere, if and when we decided to do so. The miracle was the tool's universal simplicity. David was only eight years old, yet he could use it and benefit from it.

I studied and experimented with the tool for thirty-five years before I fully explained why it works and how to use it wisely. It took me that long to discover that the tool is not a miracle. It's better than that. It's a totally supportive community process consisting of extremely wise, tough, unconditional love that, at will, we can call upon to help us act responsibly. Some people say the process is a powerful, authentic act of God.

David was an aggressive but emotionally withdrawn, troubled boy. The tool was "quality time," his time spent in Central Park. David's problems responded to contact with the park's sunshine, freedom, and wildlife. They made him more relaxed, responsive and fun; he actually smiled. The park's enchantment supported him better and quicker than did the hours of counseling, family and responsibilities that normally filled his days at home and school. In this respect, he was no different than me or most people I know. When I feel stressed or depressed, if I spend time in the park, I soon feel somewhat better, don't you? Too often, we take this fact and the park's powers for granted.

It takes no genius to recognize that parks or wilderness areas have spectacular, but often overlooked, teaching and restorative powers. I identified these powers. I developed curricula and activities to access, concentrate and reinforce them. They are a potent medicine. They enable people to strengthen and own these powers at will. People renew themselves and others with and through them. These natural powers help people manage and restore their lives.

Natural areas contain and often are unadulterated acts created by fully wholistic relationships. This training manual's activities validate that our time spent connecting with the beautiful miracles of nature is far more than just an escape from our everyday problems. No matter the moment, place or weather, natural areas and natural things always offer us a safe way to intimately experience ourselves and wholeness, and reap the benefits thereof.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"People are an integral part of nature. As we learn to assault the natural world around us, we learn to assault our true inner nature as well, and vice versa." **-Raymond Sierra**

Chapter 2
Making Peace With The War Within

Infants are born of God/ Nature, free from fears and inner conflicts, yet, as Carl Jung notes: "Whether or not we are aware of it, most of us spend our lives driven and controlled by fear: fear of failure and rejection, fear of losing what is dear to us, fear that our lives don't matter, fear of abandonment and death." We educate ourselves to our fears and disorders.

The way we learn to know the world simulates what happens when we look thorough a telescope. Through a telescope, at any given moment we only see part of the whole picture. Our daily perceptions are exactly the same. At any given moment we do not perceive the wholeness of reality. For example, at this moment you perceive the words you now read but you don't acknowledge the white space within and around them. You are aware of the words and phrases, not the space between them, yet one can't exist without the other. Both are reality. This phenomenon occurs because we learn to focus on what society teaches us is important. Because words are important, we ignore the space around them, even though it is as real as the words.

An important part of becoming connected to the whole of reality is to recognize the limits of the way we learn to perceive. Many realities of our lives lie invisible right before our eyes. Until something calls them to our attention, we don't consciously perceive or relate to them. Sometimes we discover them because we observe their effects. Their effects suggest that the invisible actually exists. To discover the invisible, we must learn to shift our focus Then we become aware of what was before us all along.

I bring this phenomenon to your attention because it hides from us a global war that our focus hides from us. That war started some 8,000 years ago and has intensified daily. Because we don't see the war, we seldom learn to deal with it. How can we if we don't even recognize that it exists? We do know something terrible is taking place because we can clearly see and feel its increasingly devastating personal and global effects.

Although I had a troubled childhood, today I have relatively few hang-ups and emotional injuries. In nature, I found a peaceful way to identify, recover from, and occasionally win, the hidden, undeclared war that caused my childhood pains and troubles. That war injures you too. It causes many of your problems. With your willingness, this training manual helps you identify and change that war to peace in your life. It enables you to directly experience forces that empower you to better your life and catalyze a more peaceful, responsible world

The invisible war rages against the natural world, you and me. It disconnects us by emotionally blowing us apart. It causes human casualties; we are them. No matter the type of horrible injuries the war inflicts on us—addictions, fatal diseases, violent behaviors, hurt and anger, emotional disorders, divorce, suicide, or unreasonable thinking— each of these injuries results from the war raging against a holistic wisdom which normally creates and sustains life and peace.

We desire to stop the war and recover from our painful injuries. To recover and improve ourselves, we must identify what is attacking us and effectively deal with it. But many of us can't find the invisible enemy. Most of us suffer from the war's rampages *and have yet to even recognize that the war exists.* Those of us in that dilemma live in extremely destructive ignorance. We are casualties and victims of war. We sense we are victims, but because we can't find the invisible war, we blame ourselves for our problems even though we neither want, invented, asked for, nor subscribe to them.

Too often, if we don't recognize the war, we assign our problems to being accidents or acts of God or chance and lose faith and hope. We must learn to recognize that *an ongoing war, not us, forces us to disconnect and causes our most difficult problems.* We feel and act like casualties and victims because we are. Denying the war's existence is part of our problem. Denial seldom solves problems, neither does complacency about being victimized. We must learn to responsibly deal with the forces that violently disconnect us.

At birth, we have neither dysfunctions nor fears. We are each born with God's or Nature's attractive perfection and natural ability to peacefully organize, regenerate and rejuvenate our lives. For this reason, people who escape the war, or who deeply, consistently ally themselves with the wisdom of peace, seldom develop or sustain injuries from the war.

I write this manual because an urgent sense of responsibility demands me to do so. It is part of my inner nature's inherent desire to enjoy and sustain peace at all levels. In a very special way, these chapters give my senses an opportunity to reach you and ally you with your deeper passion for peace in your life. Each of us receives rewards for the energies we put into this valiant ethical and moral effort. The reward is the improvement of our health in order to participate in this effort. The more you participate in the peace process, the more the life spirit in you gains fulfillment and satisfactions so that it wants to remain in you rather than disturb or abandon you. This manual's activities allow you to explore and enjoy your true inner nature's integrity. Due to the war, it no doubt presently lies disconnected, injured and hurting deep within you. All it wants is to recover, belong and dance in peace, in this life or another.

Participant's Self -guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter.

"When the forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure." **- Rudolph Bahro**

Chapter 3.
The Creation of *Us:* A Scenario

Note: When this chapter refers to God, it means universal laws and powers as you understand them to be or not to be.

Go to an attractive natural area or thing (park, backyard, flowerpot, pet, wilderness). Sense and enjoy it *in a non-language way* for five minutes or more. Then, while you are there, inventory your beliefs or understandings with respect to the following questions.

1. What, if any, is the relationship between Spirit and Nature?

2. Can you participate in your own betterment?

3. How can you experience nature's secret power to create organic integrity?

4. How can you find your authentic natural self?

5. Where can you get the wisdom to responsibly overcome feelings of powerlessness?

6. Is it possible to safely enjoin with a greater wholeness than yourself?

The Discovery of Us.*

"Out of sight, out of mind," said the guest lecturer at school that special morning "All too often, only seeing is believing."

For many of us, the process started with those words in our social studies classroom. That day, a minister, Dr. Robin Blake, who professionally was a biology professor, stood before us and said: "I have been asked to bring to your attention some ideas and activities that deserve your careful consideration. They integrate the study of ecology by amalgamating reasoning, scientific methodology and sensuality. Each plays a vital role in my life. In concert they have had a marked positive effect on me and the lives of many other people. Integrated Ecology offers a unique opportunity which you might want to further investigate. Your school has agreed to make this opportunity available to those of you who want to explore it. It helps identify an essence of our lives."

Dr. Blake continued: "Because integrated ecology honors the responsible, ever-changing perfection of the global life community, it studies the fabric of that community's ability to relate and grow harmoniously through natural attractions. That fabric, which we each inherit, unifies life relationships rather than further subdividing Earth into isolated academic and institutional cubbyholes. In reality and imagination integrated ecology returns us to our origins. There we critically measure information, procedures and behaviors by their natural attractiveness and long term effects. We then, moment by moment, responsibly organize our relationships by blending our self-balancing natural attractions.

"An essence of integrated ecology" said Dr. Blake, " is the use of *Us* , a singular, powerful, culturally familiar symbol. In scientific, educational and spiritual ways, *Us* lastingly awakens and supports the dormant harmonic unity of global wholeness that lies within us. Critical thinking, research and history concerning *Us* enjoins most personal, intercultural and interspecies relationships. Eclectically, *Us* bridges the destructive gaps between religion and science by reinforcing what these two ways of thinking hold in common

"The spiritual view of *Us* respects the popular belief in spirit of most western people. On some level, we spiritually believe that during the sixth day of creation, Genesis 1:26, *before people are created,* the Creator speaks with somebody or some things present. The Creator refers to *us* and *our* in on that sixth day saying "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness:" Who is *us* and *our*? Since people have not yet been created, the Creator can't be speaking to humanity. All that exists at that moment is the Creator and His or Her creation. For this reason, God may be speaking to *His spirit moving upon the face of the waters, to Earth and everything that creepth upon the earth. (Genesis 1-25)* This suggests that *Us* is the natural world that exists in ourselves and the environment. *Us* is God's nature, spirit and love.

"New research affirms that natural people and natural areas are *Us.* For example, researchers now report that the word *Indians* comes from Columbus calling the natural new world people he met *en Dios* -with God. The sciences of Biology, Paleontology, Geology, Physics, Anthropology and Philosophy as well as most cultures and religions agree that the human species did not create, but rather arose from and after the natural world was already established. This further suggests that we are a likeness of *Us,* having "one Breath." (Ecclesiastes 3-19). Scientifically, God making man out of dust from the soil (Genesis 2:7) to create human being also confirms *Us.* The word *human* has its roots in *humus,* a fertile forest soil. Just one teaspoon of humus consists of water, minerals and many other species: five million bacteria, twenty million fungi, one million protozoa and two hundred thousand algae. This coincides with our bodies containing water, minerals and ten times as many cells of non-human species as human cells. Over half our body weight consists of the weight of "foreign" microorganism species; over 115 different species alone live on our skin. In addition, natural attractions make the natural world physically flow through us. Every 5-7 years every molecule in our body attracts and is replaced, atom by atom, by new molecules from the environment. Constantly, the natural world becomes us, we become it. Furthermore, scientists observe that a shared global balancing mechanism guides and integrates us and every other natural being. From all these interdisciplinary findings, Integrated Ecology views and senses our lives and nature as *Us.* We are each other. *Us* is our own and every other person's true inner nature bound to Us, the natural world, God's unadulterated nature. This helps explain why most of the world's great leaders spent long periods of time in wilderness, *en dios.*

"Each of us is naturally born as *Us,* free of cultural stories and dogma. I and others gain harmonious wisdom as we rationally choose to connect with *Us* in ourselves, others and the environment. By culturing our connectedness with Us, we enjoy peace with the whole (Holy) of nature found in ourselves, others and the land. We feel upset when we hurt any part of Us, for we feel that hurt. Because we recognize the validity of *Us,* we validate our hurt feelings and their messages as well as our good feelings. Through this process our inner pain in conjunction with our natural attractions, guides us to live responsibly, for our pain not only subsides as our natural trespasses subside, it is replaced by joy."

Dr. Blake went on to say: "Most apathy, dysfunctions and disease result from stress, and most stress is caused by us abusing and disconnecting from what I call, and perhaps God calls, *Us. Us* is our own and/or another person's true inner nature as part of the whole of the natural world. Voluntarily, I and others gain a special wisdom from viewing *Us*

in this light. It results in us living more harmoniously with *Us*, the living land, waters and life-spirit within and about us. By maintaining an attractive connectedness with our origins in *Us*, we enjoy peace with the whole of nature found in ourselves, others and the landscape. We know ourselves and *Us* to be physically and spiritually one, created and sustained by the wisdom of *Us*. I seldom experience natural areas differently than myself, nor does my parish sustain, suffer from or create many of the problems of those who live their lives in separation or abuse of *Us*."

"*Us* can be described as a congress of wise attractive universal experiences" said Dr. Blake. "Because you invited me to come to your school today, I have committed myself to show you a powerful connective way to sense them and grow from them. You may use the process to improve your academics and your relationship with your inner nature. This lets you responsibly improve your outward relationships. But I can't teach you to do that here in this classroom. We must go to a nearby natural area for it is more fully *Us*. In a natural area, the natural wisdom of *Us* is present in the environment, it's not out of sight and mind. There, I will show you how to let*Us* further awaken in you for*Us* is more whole, alive and active in a natural area than indoors. But in going through this process, what's most important is that your personal belief system encourages your innate ability to think critically or to responsibly incorporate empowering wisdoms and energies directly from *Us* . It is these energies which catalyze improvements in your self-esteem, stress management and life relationships."

Some of the students chose to go to the park with Dr. Blake and do the activities with her, for her words struck home. And for them, it was as she said.

For ten minutes, in your imagination attempt to guess what Robin Blake's community was like. How did it work? How big was it? What rules did people live by? How did they make them?

What do you think Dr. Blake did in the park?

In your own words, how would you describe *Us*?

Were you surprised to discover Dr. Blake was a woman? Why?

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

Note: Before reading the chapters that follow, be sure that you understand the origin and meaning of the italicized term "Us." "Us" is the united wholeness, wisdom and spirit of the natural world and our true inner nature.

"Now I see the secret of making the best persons. It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth." - **Walt Whitman**

Chapter 4
Back to Basics

For five minutes, observe an attractive natural area or thing. Then read the quote from Walt Whitman above and write your personal experiences, thoughts and feelings which tend to validate or deny his statement.

Write here what experiences in natural areas you would want a person to have in order for you to trust their observations about connecting with the natural world in order to manage stress and gain wisdom. Do the experiences described in this chapter meet your expectations?

In September 1984, a yellow school bus outfitted with camping gear and a small library, departed from Albany, New York. It carried my 23 students, my staff and I to a natural personal growth utopia.[1] It was my 25th year sleeping under the stars year round; camping exploring and teaching across the U.S.A.

This all-season, consensus-governed outdoor program that I founded in 1959, immersed its intimate school community in rich interpersonal experiences and natural wonders. Participants lived and learned in 83 different wilderness habitats, from open, honest relationships with each other and with indigenous people(s), researchers, ecologists, the Amish, organic farmers, anthropologists, folk musicians, naturalists, shamans, historians, administrators and many others.*

As a result of their commitment to educating themselves this way, in the school community:

Chemical dependencies, including alcohol and tobacco, disappeared as did destructive interpersonal and social relationships.

Personality and eating disorders were reduced.

Violence, crime and prejudice were unknown.

Academics improved because they were applicable, hands-on and fun.

Loneliness, hostility and depression subsided.

Group interactions allowed for stress release and management; each day was fulfilling and relatively peaceful.

Students using meditation found they no longer needed to use it.

Participants knew each other better than they knew their families or best friends.

When vacation periods arrived, nobody wanted to go home, for each person had worked intensely to build this supportive, relatively comfortable living and learning utopia. They were home.

All this occurred simply because every community member committed themselves to building and participating in relationships that benefited the natural world within and around them. We became hunters and gatherers of wisdom. We intentionally organized and perpetuated appropriate tribal living relationships that awakened the inherent, but dormant, wisdom of *Us* in us. The secret to achieving this goal was to learn how to do it directly from the natural world within and without. *Us* taught us how to trust *Us*, how to discover, validate, and incorporate the wisdom of *Us*. That wisdom helped us change. It gave us greater sanity.

From my 25 years of all-season travel/study experiences in over 260 national parks, forests and sub-cultures, I developed a new, repeatable process for responsible growth and survival. In 1968 it became a tiny high school and college adjunct; by 1978, a small, accredited graduate and undergraduate degree program of the National Audubon Society.

Although our inability to deal with our runaway environmental, social and personal problems frightens me, people using these activities give me hope. The activities give us the special know-how to touch the natural world's wisdom and unleash change for the better. They do this using processes and materials appropriate for today's world, knowledge and problems, not from inapplicable cultures and environments. The results are of, by and for us, from *Us*.

These activities and concepts are being translated into native languages where they are called "Indigenous Peoples Science" and "Awakening The Great Spirit Within." Robert Muller, the former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations says that their process, *"Blazes the trail that seeks harmony with our planetary home."* Earth's environment and people sorely need this process because peace on Earth grows from peace with Earth/*Us*.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

**Dr. Robin Blake is a composite figure created from my personal relationships with Jackie and Richard Erdoes, Dr. Robert Williams, Dr. Willi Unsoeld, David Laing, Dr. Jim Griffith, Dr. Merril Abshaus, Dr. James Swan, Tom Wisner, Robert Binnewies, Dr. James Lovelock, Dr. Valentine Zetlin, and Michael Mahaffey.*

"We only begin to think when we're confronted by a problem." - **John Dewey**

Chapter 5
Meet the Wrangler

"Why are you overweight?"
"I eat a lot when I feel unhappy."
"Are you unhappy now?"
"Yes"
"Why?"
"Well I've gone on a diet and I don't stick to it. I feel so stupid, weak and insane that I continuously eat to make myself feel better."

Sometimes, a void in our lives leads us to a question whose answer fills it. In my case, I felt the void, but, quite innocently, my brother, John, asked the question to our grandmother. The void was spirituality. I had very little traditional spiritual upbringing. John's question to Grandma was: "What memories do you have of Russia, of the place you were born and raised? In the 43 years I've known you, you've never said a word about Russia." Haltingly, Grandma replied: "I remember coming out of hiding in a cellar. The horse-drawn wagon of a Jewish man passed by. Its owner held the reins in his hand, but he had no head. His bloodied head, eyes open, lay on the wagon."

My grandparents and their people fully knew and know the undeclared war against *Us*. Perhaps due to inner pain and terror, they never spoke to me of my great grandparents or their fate. The war against *Us* violated and destroyed their roots and mine. Every war does the same to many people.

My grandparents and their young children fled Russia because they were Jewish. Here in America, they protected my mother by raising her without indoctrinating her in Jewish rituals or any other specific spirituality. It was a reasonable decision based on the harsh reality of fear, fear that persecution could happen here, too. That decision led me to spend the first 56 years of my life as an agnostic. I learned to depend upon responsible critical thinking to answer any questions I had. For this reason, I dismiss most traditional or institutionalized spiritual dogmas simply because they usually defy the rules of evidence for them. But, as the preceding chapters indicate, I did find a trustable spirituality in the natural world . It led me to resonate with *Us* and enjoy its fulfilling utopian effects. *Us* beguiled me. It enticed me to offer this manual's sensory questions and activities in order to introduce other reasonable people to *Us* and its wisdom.

My personal void was a vicious circle. I could not accept purely spiritual answers to questions simply because I had no indoctrinated spiritual roots in me, no words or labeled concepts to which to attach such answers. What problem(s) in your life sustain themselves because something in your life is missing that would give you support and peace? Where do you see this happening in others? *Write your responses here or elsewhere:*

You can't solve problems when they seem to have no solution. A horse named Buster taught me this one day on an alpine-ecology pack trip in the Rocky Mountains. Having finished lunch, our school group prepared to mount our horses and continue our journey. Roger, one of my students, couldn't mount Buster because while Buster

grazed, his head was low and he had stepped on his own rein. No problem, you'd think, merely make the horse move off his rein and pick it up as he steps off it. NOT! Not Buster, anyhow. He would not move unless his head was in the air, maybe to see where he was going. But unless he could get his foot off his rein, he couldn't lift his head because it was held down by his foot on the rein. And he couldn't get off his rein unless he moved. A paradox: no head raised-- no move; no move--no get off rein; no get off rein--no get head raised. Sound familiar?

"Are you happy that people are upset with you?"
"No."
"Why are they upset?"
"Because I use drugs and booze and zone out on them."
"How do you deal with this problem?"
"I get happy again."
"How?"
"With relationships that include using drugs and booze."

Roger waved his hands. He yelled, "Gee-up! Move on! Hey-yaw!" like cowboys do in movies. Nothing happened. Then Roger walked behind Buster to push him off the rein. "Hey Rog, " I called "Can you come here for a second?" Roger walked away from Buster's rear --which was my reason for calling him over. "Rog," I said, "A horse will kick backwards when irritated, it's unsafe to be behind him." "Oh," said Rog, "But my horse refuses to get off his rein, I can't get Buster to move. Even Buster wants to move to the uneaten grass in front of him and he can't do it."

"Why, Rog?"

"Buster is illogical. He refuses to move unless his head is raised."

"Why , Rog?"

"Maybe he's afraid. I get it! It's not a logic problem, it's a psycho-logic problem. Let's motivate Buster to deal with it. If that doesn't work, we'll call the wrangler. He'll know what to do."

So Roger and I yelled, pushed, shoved and attempted to scare Buster to no avail. In jest, we reasoned with the horse, we talked to it. "Buster," said Rog, "Maybe you ought to figure out how realistic it is to have this hang-up of not moving unless your head is raised. What's wrong or uncomfortable about taking a step with your head down? Think about it." Nothing happened. "What experiences have you had that taught you to move only with your head high? Where did you learn that?" I said, "Who taught it to you?" No answer. "Do you think you are taking good care of yourself by only walking with your head raised? You're letting it deprive you of that delicious grass just ahead of you. Do you feel you don't deserve it? How do you feel?" I continued. No response. "When you were a pony did your mother tell you that only bad little horsies walked around with their head down?" asked Rog. Nothing happened. Buster didn't budge. He would not respond to our words or with our"trying to make sense of our lives approach." Whether it was due to a lack of "horse sense" or the language barrier (he was a Western horse and had no experience with "English") is immaterial for we ran out of things to say.

We decided that Buster's behavior was not our problem, rather, it was a cultural problem. Buster and other horses were natural wild and free beings. For 20 million years*Us* alone wisely guided them. Buster's halter, bridle and rein were conceived and constructed by people, not by horses. They meet people's needs, not Buster's, so Roger and I needed a people-made solution. It soon appeared in the form of the wrangler. After his uncalled-for guffaws at our useless "greenhorn" efforts, he, with great strength, picked up Buster's leg and pulled the rein out from under it saying, "That's not the first time that's ever happened."

Roger and I admired the wrangler's expertise, but we both agreed that Buster had learned nothing from it--absolutely nothing. The next time Buster stepped on his rein he would find himself in exactly the same predicament. He'd be dependent on some wrangler, accident or his horse sense to resolve it for him. Scolding or whipping Buster would only make the situation worse because then he'd fear the wrangler and anxiety would further immobilize him. The situation troubled us for we recognized that it resembled our problems in too many

ways. What were we being taught by our leaders and experts, the wranglers in our lives? How were they helping us grow? Were they supporting our growth or unwisely directing it? Were they nurturing our wisdom, wholeness and "horse sense," or discounting it?

> *Billy, needing a sweater, decided to solve his problem by knitting one. He wrote home for eight dollars to purchase wool but instead, disappointingly, his father sent him an expensive store-bought sweater in the mail (a wrangler solution to Bill's problem). His father (the wrangler) wrote to say that, ""Boys don't knit," demeaning Billy's thoughts on the matter. "Knitting is a waste of time at school, time which could best be spent in learning," noted Dad the wrangler. As with Buster, Billy's wrangler-dad never gave Billy a chance to create a solution for himself. Billy, as well as his father, had learned nothing new from the interaction. The next time Billy needed a sweater, he would again be dependent on some wrangler for it. In addition, Billy ended up unsure it was a responsible or manly thought for him to learn to knit a sweater, and that reduced his self-esteem.*

Most of our serious problems result from people not fully respecting that we are each wise natural beings. Like Buster, our nature best recognizes and responds to the non-languaged wisdom of *Us*, its natural parent. From birth, the wranglers we encounter at home, school or work, excessively halter and bridle our lives, causing our unsolvable circular problems. Our programming prevents us from easily unbridling or unhitching ourselves from the wranglers, even when we want to, even when it makes perfect sense to do so. We're programmed to pay attention to wranglers, not to disregard them. Their reins keep jerking us to accept our halters and them. In addition, wranglers don't teach us to change for the better by teaching us how to deal with the anxieties that plague us from our encounters with them. Nor do they teach us to learn from the wisdom of *Us*, because that wisdom is often foreign to them. You see, wranglers have been as haltered and are as anxious as we are, sometimes more so. *That's why they act like wranglers.* Our hope lies in the fact that *Us* itself can teach us *and* our wranglers to solve our problems. *Us* can do this because *Us* has the wisdom to do so and *Us* lies within all of us. Our problems stem from our collective alienation and estrangement from *Us*. For this reason, it makes perfect sense for each of us to responsibly re-connect with *Us*.

Go to a natural area or thing that attracts you. Sense and enjoy it for 3 minutes or more. Then make a list of the wranglers that influence and/or direct your life at home, school, and work . How do you or did you feel about them? How do or did they affect you? Have you internalized those who wrangled you so that now parts of you wrangle you? *Write your responses here or elsewhere:*

Complete the exercise in the box. Review the Section B instructions on page 5 before continuing.

Section B. Participants' Reactions:

My mother is a wrangler because she still treats me like a child even though I'm grown up. It makes me nervous being with her because I don't want to hurt her but I do want my independence.

I'm wrangled by the market place. Without informing me, it tells me to buy things that may not be good for me. I feel used, like a laboratory animal.

The fire chief wrangled me when he wouldn't let me join the volunteer fire squad because I'm a woman.

My father is an alcoholic, he ignored and abused me. I still can't feel that I had my rights and that he was wrong. Part of me still feels it was my fault that he mistreated me.

My teacher wrangles me because even though I do the best I can in math, I am barely passing the course. I feel inadequate, like I should do and be something else. But I've got to leave school to find myself and some self-esteem. I don't feel worthwhile there.

I'm being wrangled by my doctor. I know that their are potential cures for my disease in other countries, but he won't even inform me about them.

The government is a wrangler. It's laws and logic goad us into having the problems we have, and then it makes us feel like we're wrong or stupid for having them. For example, the government supports itself from taxes on liquor, cigarettes and gambling, it owns and operates liquor stores and lotteries.

I'm a child, so even though I'm an expert on being one, my teacher won't listen to me because I am one.

The Department of Education is a wrangler. It means well but it forces my daughter to spend most of her childhood in a school setting that's far from perfect. I feel awful that she's being wranglered into harmful habits and relationships and I'm paying taxes to support that situation. I have to spend time and money trying to undo what she's learning from the atmosphere in school and at the same time I'm paying for it to happen.

Each cigarette I smoke wrangles me into further believing that I can't feel good without it.

I'm wrangled by being sold the great American dream which relatively few people enjoy and for which many suffer.

The bias of our culture wrangles me. I'm a natural being and our culture is determined to conquer nature. Where do I learn to be and enjoy my natural self, the *Us* in me?

I stunned my sexually abusive father when I told him that I refused to let him be my parent any more because I didn't want to grow up to be like him.

Isn't my priest a wrangler when he tells me I was born a sinner? I think that's why I habitually put myself down and feel that I'm wrong. In God I trust, is God a wrangler too?

My army sergeant wrangled me when he ground my head into a brick wall because my last name was the same as the last name of a soldier who tried to stab him a month ago.

Sometimes written or spoken words wrangler me. They instruct me to do things without thinking about the short or long term effects of my actions. Then later I feel bad about the situation and my irresponsibility. I lose my self-respect. For example, words labeled North Vietnamese people as "Gooks" and "enemy" which dehumanized them. This allowed me to enlist and feel okay about killing them then. Now, what I did blows my mind.

Fashions and the media evidently wrangle me. If I'm not wearing clothing that's in, then I feel out.

I have not even desired to drink alcohol during the past 12 years, yet my recovery group wrangles me by insisting that I refer to myself as a drunk.

My environmental education professor is a wrangler when she tells me that my passion for the natural environment's welfare is unscientific, soft, fuzzy thinking. She says it's emotional, subjective and destructive. Isn't "Mother Earth" subjective? What's going on anyhow?

Wranglers are cultural warriors, they conquer my inner nature.

Parts of me have been so wrangled that they have learned the wrangler's stories and ways. I've got wranglers in me. I know that parts of me wrangle other parts of me because sometimes I'm at odds with myself. I do nonsensical things without having any idea why I do them. Sometimes I feel bad when there's nothing to feel bad about.

Are you being wrangled? Why? Good evidence suggests that each of us is born with the potential to use the wisdom of *Us* to live in harmony with *Us* in the environment and each other. Every culture creates a belief system about how to best achieve this end. Our culture has long believed that we achieve civilized life by learning to conquer*Us*. We train and support our leaders into wranglering us to do this. We separate ourselves from the peace and wisdom of *Us* whenever we subscribe to, rather than recover from and change, our culture's conquest of*Us*. But once we become aware of *Us* and learn how to connect to its wisdom, we each have the choice to either sustain or conquer *Us*.

How can you identify a wrangler? It is comfortable and inherent as well as ethically and morally reasonable for us to live in *Us's* peace. A person who teaches us not to do so is wranglering us in a direction that, deep down inside, we don't want to go. Any person's unreasonable, discomforting actions, bias or teachings symptomize that he or she may be wranglering you. When you ask a question and receive an answer that makes you more dependent and less participatory or thoughtful, you're probably talking to a wrangler. We're all wranglers at one time or another. We change from situation to situation. The trick is to catch ourselves and each other in the act.

The reaction of the final participant: "I know that parts of me wrangle other parts of me because I'm at odds with myself," deserves special attention. Without us being aware of it, wrangling can and does teach us to not only become wranglers at times, but to wrangle ourselves. For example, when you tell yourself you are not living up to your own expectations and this makes you feel sad, discouraged or apathetic, you know your inner wrangler is doing its thing because it is shutting you down. *Us* never shuts you down. You can learn to overcome your inner wrangler by learning how to connect with *Us* in other people and in natural areas.

Food for thought: You and I can't choose to act responsibly if we've been wranglered into believing : "My thoughts and feelings are not worthwhile because they're mine." Too often we learn to know ourselves this way because *Us* in us has been conquered. When we think critically, it makes sense to learn directly from *Us* whenever possible because *Us* has demonstrated that it is wise enough to support rather than destroy itself.

Do you really think Buster, if left alone would remain forever and die at that alpine lake because he couldn't move off his rein? Wouldn't something like a bee bite, a filly or a thunderstorm sooner or later and get him off that rein?

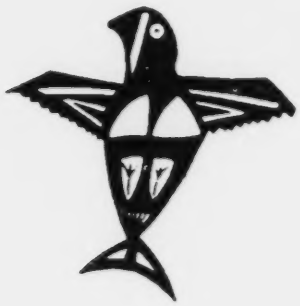
The Challenge: The wrangler is a person or force that shuts down *Us* in you rather than nurturing *Us*. *In the chapters that follow, try to discover the wrangler at work in yourself, others and the natural world.* When you do, learn to deal with wranglers by using the manual's activities to connect you with *Us* wherever and whenever *Us* attracts you. Keep in mind that only you can dismiss the wrangler that lies in you, but as you learn to revive *Us* in you, you become empowered to do so. The activities help you revive*Us* in you.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what are your three most important points of this chapter:

Section Two

FEELINGS ARE FACTS

Indoor Activities for Critically Thinking About Wholeness



"The heart has its reasons which reason does not know." - **Pascal**

Chapter 6
Isolation From Wholeness

"I really needed the money and they were paying $40.00 an hour for subjects to lie floating in their experimental sensory-deprivation apparatus. But it made me so tense that it drove me crazy. I could only do it for two hours even though I signed up for six."

In its infinite time, wisdom and perfection, *Us,* the natural world and its spirit, designed me to be left-handed, and that's exactly how I was born in 1929. I am in a minority, for most people are born right-handed. I soon discovered that the right-handed population designed their society around the will of the majority. Drinking fountains, door handles and even the opening in my underwear were made for right-handed people, not for me.

In the 1930's, at my elementary school, the inkwells were inconveniently embedded in the right side of the desk. But being left-handed at school was more than an inconvenience. It was an outrage, a war against left-handedness that caused many disorders. At school, society strictly imposed its right-handed bias on *Us,* on God's biological will in me. By law, the school system wrangled me to write right-handed. I never really felt comfortable doing so. I became overweight because eating sweets offered me comforts that fulfilled my frustrated left-hand tensions. My posture was bad. I was round shouldered because I felt unfulfilled, like I carried the weight of the world. I know people whose left arms were broken from being hit by a ruler because they were caught writing left-handed. The war against *Us,* against being who we naturally are, physically as well as emotionally injures us. For example, preventing me from expressing my left-handedness inaugurated anxieties in me that gave me speech disorders. I liked having them. I held on to them because if I couldn't say things well, I wouldn't get myself in trouble complaining about the outrage of having to write with my right hand. With respect to being left-handed, in 1938, for me school was nothing short of a battlefield.

My extraordinarily supportive family and ethnic community helped me through my left-handed problems. My peoples' deep love, care and concern for me provided emotional fulfillment. They guided me to obtain speech training and food awareness. With their love and support I no longer felt unconfident about speaking out, nor did I constantly desire candy. However, tendencies towards these ailments remain with me to this day, 56 years later. My poor penmanship, spelling and back problems today reflect that for the first five years of school, I was wrangled into writing right-handed, with little success. Right-handedness and writing felt wrong so I was not motivated to practice my penmanship enough to perfect it. Today, my handwriting's so bad I could become a doctor.

Each of us has many biologically natural desires that are similar to left-handedness: art, music, athletics, compassion, community, safety, nurturing, place, peace. They are *Us* in us. I use the following exercise to help my workshop participants recognize some of the problems that result when wranglers unwisely impose our cultural bias on *Us,* our true inner nature and spirit.

Review the instructions on page 4 before doing this activity:

A mother, who felt her newborn daughter was unattractive and needed protection from wranglers, raised her child in a closet.

Any person born and raised in a closet has and causes extreme problems. For 30 seconds, consider this question: "What and how might a closet-bound woman think, feel and act when, at the age of 19, she is finally discovered and required to leave the closet? *Write your thoughts, feelings and reactions:*

In this and every other chapter, do not do Section B until you have completed the exercise in the box and read the Section B instructions on page 5.

Section B. Participants' reactions:

She would be abnormal.

Many of her human qualities would be unexercised or dead.

She'd be bonded to things in the closet.

She might believe God created the closet as the best place and way for her to live.

Contact with people would frighten her.

Leaving the closet would be a risk.

She would not know how to act appropriately outside the closet, she'd need special care and constant support and guidance.

She might addictively bond to anything outside the closet that made her feel comfortable there.

People would have to deal with her problems, she wouldn't be popular.

She'd be scared, numb and dumb.

She'd be like an anxious and un-spirited moron, she'd make big mistakes and probably die.

She'd be very removed from many aspects of *Us*.

Putting her in charge of managing the natural world would be like having a sheep managing Kennedy International Airport.

How does the plight of a closeted person apply to you? With respect to having responsible relationships with *Us* and long-term survival, the plight of a closeted person is little different than our own. *Studies show that, on average, Americans spend over 95% of their lives indoors. Collectively, each of us average less than a day/lifetime in natural areas.* That's the depth of our first-hand relationship with *Us*, our internal and external biological community, our planetary home. Society wrongly closets us from it.

How does closeting effect you? Like being born left-handed, or with a specific hair or skin color, we inherit wise traits from *Us* that empower us to survive in harmony with the natural world. Our extreme closeting from the natural environment often injures our natural characteristics and sensitivities. It painfully wrangles many natural round-peg parts of us into society's square holes. The process is often immoral in that it hurtfully programs our body and mind to bond to indoor life, not to *Us*. It abuses and numbs our natural sensitivities, it makes us excessively fear *Us*. Even when outdoors, our indoor programming wrangles us habitually think, feel and act in ways foreign to the peace of the natural world. We're unable to truly connect with it. Not surprisingly, our closet-bonded bias firmly believes that our excessive indoor lives and dependencies are the best, if not the only, way to survive.

Where can you find *Us?* *Us* exists within us as well as around us. Within us we call it our personal biology, our physiology, our psychology. *When we emotionally or sentiently feel Us within us we call it our inner child.* We

call *Us* outside ourselves "nature", the "natural environment", "natural area," "countryside" or "wilderness".

Considerations: Natural wisdom processes and regenerative powers flourish as *Us* in natural areas. Because our extreme indoor lives closet us from *Us* and its wisdom in the natural world, we suffer in the same ways any closeted person would suffer. Our symptoms only stop when we learn to connect and grow in conjunction with the natural world in other people *and* in the environment. *Both* are essential for wholeness, for improving ourselves, for recovery wisdom. To ignore either one severely limits healthy growth because selecting one over the other subdivides and weakens *Us*, the natural world's integrity as a whole. This increases the problems we're trying to solve. Their solution is to follow our attractions to the wisdom of *Us*, rather than be wrangled into conquering *Us*.

Food for thought. Obviously, something is drastically wrong. The road to civilization was never meant to lead to today's runaway greed, pollution, war, unhappiness, stress, social injustice, dependencies, loneliness, dysfunctions and violence. To discover a more responsible path we must, in reality and imagination, return to our origins and build more responsible foundations. Our origins are in *Us*. Until we admit and address our schizoid separation from our biological/spiritual integrity, our civilization and madness remain synonymous.

No person is an island. To feel happy, safe and secure in today's irresponsible world, can sometimes be a symptom of emotional withdrawal from reality.

In our language-governed society, our words and concepts are our destiny. They define the path we follow. They have brought us our advantages and dilemmas. Today, as we observe their long-term effects, we see that yesterday's words and concepts misguided us. When Columbus, and those who followed, landed in pristine North America, they inoculated this continent with Western Culture's exploitive survival story. Now, distraught headlines convey the globally disastrous effects of that inoculation on people and the planet. It defies and defiles the wisdom of *Us*.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"We are suffering a kind of collective hypnosis, a cultural trance that prevents us from seeing things the way they really are." - **William Irwin Thompson**

Chapter 7
Recovery From Disconnection

Although she physically lived in the modern world, her upbringing had so hurt and frightened her, that she was mentally and emotionally isolated. But her ordinarily fatal disease disappeared as she started thinking by feeling. The process established new contacts with the natural world in people and places and Us *did the rest.*

My parents and extended family sufficiently expressed their love for me and *Us*. Without preaching it to me, my extraordinarily supportive childhood nourished my innate love of *Us*'s expression and restorative powers in nature. For example, recently a woman in recovery told me that when she was seven, she complained to her parents that the man living next door was sexually molesting her. Her parents reacted by wrangling her. They beat her for stirring up trouble with the neighbors. Her story caused me to remember when, at age eight, I caused neighborhood trouble by removing a struggling bird that was caught in a neighbor's rat trap. In disgust, I threw the trap down a sewer. The neighbor, angry about the loss of the trap, abusively reproached my mother. He made her cry as he fiercely scolded her for bad parenting. But, mother didn't punish me. Instead, she simply asked me to understand the reason why the neighbor was angry. She also praised me for caring about the bird's welfare and for my thought that the trap should have been placed where birds couldn't get into it. Many similar supportive childhood experiences allowed me to fearlessly observe and enter beneficial, but often overlooked or taboo, sensory/spiritual relationships with the natural world and people.

Daily, we each have the responsibility to find ways to gain support for the naturally sensible part of ourselves, the part that connects us to the wisdom of *Us*. The following activity will help you meet that goal.

How might you help a woman recover who must leave the wardrobe closet into which she was born and raised? How would you expect her to react? *Write your response here:*

Section B. Participants' reactions: The following participant replies deserve attention, for they touch upon some of the directions taken by this book's nature-connecting activities. Respond to them as per Section B instructions on page 5.

I'd help a closeted person see the life-qualities, advantages and values she'd gain by living outside the closet. I'd let her know that it was not her fault that she was placed in the closet.

She might hold prejudices for her closet environment and ways, and against those of the outside world. She would be sure her closeted ways were right because she was emotionally bonded to them. I'd have to slowly expose her to new outside concepts and ideas and give her time to explore and value them.

She'd probably think differently than I do. I'd try to help her think critically about things that would help her feel comfortable outside the closet.

I think she'd have many fears about the outside. I'd get her to trust me and then support her as she encountered the outside. I'd protect her from being wranglered.

If she choose to leave the closet, I'd find out why, what aspects of the outside she trusted or found attractive. I'd give her time to enjoy them. I'd help her reinforce them and let her grow from those relationships.

I might ask her to risk not returning to the closet in order that new survival relationships would have time to become familiar.

I'd give her an overview of where her growth had been stunted so she'd be aware of her shortcomings and try to overcome them.

She'd probably learn best from hands-on experiences outside rather than explanations and descriptions alone.

Because she'd communicated very differently when imprisoned in the closet, I'd help her learn to communicate effectively with people who were her friends.

I'd expect that many of her inherent skills and senses had never been exercised and might be undeveloped or non-existent. I'd make allowances for those areas and have no expectations for them.

I'd make sure that she had a lifetime support group so she wouldn't lose any gains she made.

I'd see if and how she experienced God and help her to rely upon and grow from that experience.

I'd let her remain in the closet and slowly reinforce the positive aspects of being out of the closet. I'd let her work through adverse stimuli at her own pace.
I'd introduce her to *Us* and let*Us* do what it does best.

How can you recover from your closeting? In order to recover from our nature-closeted existence, it makes sense for us to follow some of the steps listed above with respect to our relationship with *Us*, the natural world that exists in the environment and in people, including ourselves.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think." **- Gregory Bateson**

Chapter 8
Inner Child Ecology

Drifting grey clouds, tinged with the glowing orange of evening, waltz across the sky to the music of the wind.

For the first 29 years of my life I was born and raised as part of mainstream America. Its promises, expectations and faults intellectually and emotionally shaped me. Then, for the feelingful reasons I describe later, I elected to risk spending much of my time in a different mold. I lived outdoors. For 33 years I thought, lived and learned in magnificent natural areas. Under the circumstances described in Chapter 4, throughout the seasons natural wonders became my home, billowing clouds my ceiling, and the landscape my pillow. I slept to the lullaby of the wind, under the blanket of the weather's fickle temperament, and I continue to do so. My community was a self-contained society of individuals committed to making sense of life and sustaining sensible lives. The guiding light that held us together was the multitude of attractions we felt to each other and the land. That light was *Us*.

Some say I've been in the woods too long and it shows. However, I suggest they measure my experience in nature by its long term effects. When I compare its effects to the personal and global effects of our excessively indoor society, I conclude that most of us have not been in the woods long enough. The magic of my outdoor relationships compels me to share them and invite others to enjoy nature's spirit, sense and beauty. That's why I designed these activities and enjoy the opportunity they present me.

The following workshop exercise invites you to further think about my experiences:

Read the statement below and react to it:

The Wisdom of *Us*

Too often we forget that the natural world is a pleasing, intelligent global life community that exists within and around us. It survives by continually organizing, preserving and regenerating all of itself, including people(s) that heed and respect it.

When undisturbed, the natural world globally approaches an ever-changing perfection, an optimum of life and diversity without war, pollution and garbage; without excess crime, insanity, stress, unhappiness and violence. It is an excellent model of peace. It is rarely a wrangler.

When healthy, nature's life processes heal scarred landscapes as well as our personal bruises, emotional wounds and destructive relationships.

With the exception of our destructive cultural tendencies, such as pollution, wrangling and war, we are to the natural world as our leg is to our body. Nature and we are identical. What happens to the natural world happens to us and vice versa for we are *Us*. *Write your thoughts, feelings and reactions here or elsewhere:*

Please review Section B instructions found on page 5.

Section B. Participants' reactions:

Right on!

How do you heed nature?

Where is nature within us?

Everything is natural, including us, so everything we do is natural, even pollution.

It makes nature sound like it's God.

Nature does bad things like hurricanes, draughts and snakes.

If we are nature, why do we live unnaturally?

Science conquers nature, so science isn't natural.

The good in us is the good in the natural world expressing itself.

Male alligators eat baby alligators. That's criminally insane.

Nature is nurture. *Us* isn't a wrangler

Where is *Us* in you? The natural world, having no spoken language, largely consists of non-verbal relationships. From and before birth, we biologically experience these relationships as emotions, senses and feelings. We are born as us being *Us*, extraordinarily trusting, with very few innate fears and with extraordinary natural wisdoms and sensitivities for living on Planet Earth. We come into life free from hostility and aggression, free from distinctions which divide up the world into right or wrong, useful or useless, good or bad, progressive or regressive. Our natural wisdom and sensuality remains with us throughout our lives as our *inner child.* Unwittingly, we wrangle it into producing our problems.

What is the nature of my inner child? One of the languaged ways our closeted upbringing teaches us to separate ourselves from nature, is by calling the natural world's sensory expression within us our *inner child,* rather than call it *the natural world within.* But, as we will see, our inner child is of, by and from *Us,* It is always a seamless continuum of the natural world. Our sensitive non-languaged inner child is *Us* personified, our true nature.

By validating the feelingful callings of the little child within us, we may learn to hear and emulate the natural world; to perceive and relate in its wise, balanced ways; to enjoy its energies and peace. The process connects our reasoning and awareness to the natural world within us and others. It complies with Zeno's observation in 300 BC: *"The goal of life is living in agreement with Nature."* The question we must each ask ourselves is: "Can we truly learn to meet this goal within the confines and wranglerings of our excessively nature separated lives?" Is it enough to simply say that we should fulfill our attractions to *Us?* Does saying it make us do it?

Why doesn't your inner child always feel good? When unthreatened, our inner child feels good because it consists of love that lies within us. It enjoys the rewards of being *Us.* In contrast, our society survives by believing a false cultural story. That story underlies our wars, institutions and thinking. It tells us: *To survive, conquer nature*

within and without. Wrangle it, subdue it, take dominion over it. Grind it into grist for building an overprotective indoor world. That story wrangles us. It is our society's blatant, but unratified, declaration of war against *Us*.

The injurious violation we each must deal with is that since our inner child is biologically and spiritually one with the natural world, as our society wrangles us to separate from, conquer and hurt the natural world, we do exactly the same to the little child within us. It senses and sends us signals of pain, rejection, abandonment and unhappiness. Those signals produce unquenchable needs and dependencies on further involvement, support and fulfillment. However, we've been conditioned to get support for ourselves from the same destructive, closeted, wranglering that conquers our inner child. *This vicious circle is the core of our problems.*

From 33 years of intensely living and learning in natural areas, I find that to survive responsibly, we must relate through a more accurate, healthier story. That story does not say that we must wrangle and conquer nature in order to survive. Instead, it wisely says, *We may best sustain ourselves by sustaining the whole of life. Us* lives by this story. We each biologically inherit its "Sustain Wholeness" Blueprint. Our inner child continually reads this Blueprint to us in its sensory/spiritual language, not in English, French or Latin.

Food for thought. We often design our lives to avoid triggering our abandonment pain. This is exemplified by a fascinating study. It shows that most people, no matter if they are extremely rich or poor, feel they need approximately 20% more money to be happy. Such off-centered, "never satisfied" feelings fuel our runaway social and environmental irresponsibility. Our closeting, exploitive cultural story has deeply hurt and misled us.

My studies show that by validating the *nature* of our inner child, we learn to emulate the natural world; to perceive and relate in its wise, balanced ways; to enjoy its energies and peace. This changes the destructive aspects of society and ourselves into fulfilling, lasting responsible relationships. The energies ordinarily drained by chemical and resource dependencies, anger, prejudice, violence, food disorders, smoking and the like became available as fuel for enjoyably connecting with each other, the land and its people. But when we disregarded our feelingful inner child, learning was short lived and ineffective; our relationships became disruptive.

The most important lesson I learned from my decades in natural areas is how to let the natural world, the inner child itself, teach us its ways. That may sound strange, but today the unique activities I developed quickly share this secret. By giving our inner child a tangible spoken language, they make the natural world's wisdom available at home, school, work or play.

Responsible counseling and education can teach a responsible story. But simply knowing the story is as ineffective behaviorally as reading the warning notices on cigarette packages. Stories educate, but they seldom re-educate. Sometimes we are wrangled to learn the right stories and we get the wrong message. To re-educate, to change our irresponsible ways, we must also learn how to safely loosen our wranglered thinking and emotional bonding to our destructive closeted indoor ways. *We must learn to wisely re-bond to the enjoyable survival wisdom of* Us.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"We distort our sense of reality by the language we use." **- Henri Bergson.**

Chapter 9
Other Ways of Knowing

The tribal elders discussed what name they, the continent's original inhabitants, should ask to be called. They were not from India, so "Indians" would not do. Some elders suggested they be called "original," "natural," "indigenous" or "first nation" people. Then Slow Turtle said: "At the time Columbus arrived here, India was not even called 'India.' That's not why we're called Indians. Because we, the original inhabitants, were so at home in nature, in his log book Columbus described us as 'en Dios,' meaning 'at one with God.' 'En dios' became 'Indians.' 'Indian' might actually be an appropriate name for us," he concluded.

The elementary school rules that wrangled me into being a "left-hander forced to write right-handed" demeaned my inner child. I learned to feel bad about this aspect of myself. But the tensions from the confrontation kept me alert to further inroads that school made on *Us,* my biological self. More and more I found my true inner nature becoming different labels. I was no longer simply the label of my name, "Mike." I was "Arithmetic," "History," "Reading," "Penmanship (ich!)," "Student," "Conduct." Each label received another label, a grade "A-F" and a report card that informed the world exactly which label I was. The tense little child within me quickly learned to excel at being different labels because it gained rewards for doing so. Sometimes it was interesting, occasionally it was fun. I did well at it, except penmanship. I became a person teachers would listen to. Finally, by sixth grade they could hear me loud and clear: **"I WANT TO WRITE WITH MY LEFT HAND."**

Perhaps because I was 11 years old and reading at an 11th grade level, they let me write lefty. What resulted was: In a six month period, I learned to write better as a lefty than I had written as a righty after five years. I felt better about myself because my true inner nature expressed and proved its truth. I discovered that the wranglers' "supposed to be" world of "should," "must" "right" and "wrong" could imprison me for no good reason. I learned to question that world and never fully trust it. When it was unreasonable, it was wrong, not me. *Us* within me had won a battle in the war against *Us* and I felt unified.

For sixth months I sailed through school and life with confidence, motivation, pride and self esteem. It surprised me to see that most teachers appreciated this new me. As I joyfully thought and observed critically, I recognized that other students had not survived the wrangling and labeling process as well as I had. They were in pain and they acted out their hurt in anti-social self-destructive ways, sometimes against me. Sadly, they did not win the wranglers' war-of-labels against their feelingful natural self. Instead, they learned to unconstructively attack the wranglers or tranquilize their pain. They seldom found or gained fulfillment or support from *Us* within themselves, for the years had disintegrated *Us* within them. *Us* lay buried under labels that didn't identify it.

I believe I was the only lefthander in school that the administration allowed to right lefthanded. The rest of the lefties graduated as penmanship righties. They not only become proficient at it, it became part of their identity. They learned to deny still anther value of *Us* in them. They not only gained diplomas, they gained the pain and confusion of not knowing or expressing their authentic selves. They spent the remainder of their lives constructively or destructively dealing with that inner hurt and the tranquilizers for it on which they became dependent. Many of them still suffer from their fear and anger about being *Us* and being treated accordingly by themselves and others.

Today when I'm stressed, my uncomfortable "left-handed is wrong" inadequacy and rejection feelings tend to awaken and play until I ask *Us* to put them to sleep. This next activity helps empower you to do likewise. Jose Lucero, a member of the Santa Clara Pueblo, showed its rudiments to me and I expanded it as follows:

Interact C.

1. Wave one arm in a circular motion above your head. While keeping the circular motion going, lower and raise your arm below chest height. Do this a few times. *Write how this feels here:*

Please review Section B instructions found on page 35

Section B: Participant's reactions:

This is fun.

I sense motion, aliveness, direction, the touch of air, freedom, gravity and will.

It feels fine. I feel free and elated.

Even an infant can do this. It's inherent, it's natural.

I feel strange because those people over there are watching us.
They must think I'm queer. Actually, I think I'm queer doing this.

No pain, no stress, not much challenge. Why are we waving our arms?

Interact C continued.

Repeat the above activity but speak, think, talk and/or read aloud while moving and directing your arm up and down. *Write what you feel here:*

Section B: Participants' reactions:

Speaking ties-up my language and reasoning abilities, but other senses like *motion, direction, consciousness, gravity* and *place* continue to move and direct the actions of my arm, even as I speak or read.

My language and reason self is tied up in talking, but some other ways of thinking or knowing move my arm.

I've always had this independent ability but I never recognized it in words.

It feels like two different ways of knowing or being exist within me.

Interact D

Repeat the first activity but this time only circle your arm directly above your head in a horizontal clockwise direction (In this case *clockwise* being the direction you would see the hands of a clock move if the clock faced down from directly above you, i.e. you saw a clock mounted in the ceiling instead of on a wall). Now, slowly lower your horizontally clockwise-circulating arm to chest-level and note that as you look down at it, it is going counter-clockwise rather than clockwise even though you never changed its direction. *Write your reactions here:*

Section B. Participants' reactions:

This almost feels like a miracle

It puzzles me. I physically changed nothing from what I comfortably did or felt before but now my behavior is two opposite things simultaneously.

My language-reasoning has polarized my one whole action into opposites.

I was comfortable before, now I'm perplexed.

Changing my way of knowing from actually being, into words describing my being, changed what I knew.

At first, I had a hard time getting the directions right and moving my arm clockwise. I felt stupid. I wrangled myself. I attacked and demeaned myself because I couldn't do what the words said. I felt that other people thought I was stupid. Yet two minutes before, I was waving my arm and it felt OK. Was I simply enjoying ignorance then?

Interact A

Read the following statement: By labeling various parts of this whole non-language act, we conceptually put it into the symbolic language and reasoning concepts of the opposing abstractions "clockwise" and "counter-clockwise." Our dependency, training and familiarity with language and reasoning takes over. It subdivides what was originally a comfortable natural act. The comfortable act becomes a subdivision of opposites, a cognitive complexity, even though, on a non-language basis, it remains an enjoyable natural unified *Us* behavior. *Reactions:*

Section B. Participants' reactions:

I never before recognized that I had senses like direction, place, and motion which could act independently of what I was consciously thinking or saying with words.

I felt very comfortable with just the non-language experience of moving my arm. I often lose sight of that.

My point of view with respect to my arm completely changed what I saw.

Putting labels on different parts of the whole arm-moving experience subdivided it and made it controversial.

My being able to move my arm today results from 14 billion years of nature and God co-evolving life and arriving at this moment. The words "clockwise" and "counter-clockwise" omit this key biological nature/spirit fact which they have in common. Moving my arm is a anything but a simple act, rather it is the miraculous complexity of life and of spirit in action. It is whole, it is one and it feels good.

Most of the labels I've learned leave out the 14 billion years; they take it for granted...as a given that we can ignore or exploit.

I find my life is simpler when I just trust and enjoy natural ways.

Labels color what I know, they allow my closeted indoor upbringing to manipulate natural realities.

It's important for me to validate my natural self, otherwise I lose sight of its value.

There was no stress or conflict about waving my arm until I changed the experience into words.

The labels "clockwise" and "counter-clockwise" alone were not realistic because they didn't describe everything that was happening. That causes conflict.

The labels imposed industrial society's outlooks on my natural being and my nature got lost or conflicted in the process.

It disturbs me to realize that I been wrangled to mostly know nature and my inner nature by words and concepts describing it, not by time spent simply sensing, feeling and enjoying it.

My being an educated person is measured by my language and reasoning abilities, not by what I already know naturally. Non-languaged, unexplained arm waving is considered ignorance or silly, that's why I felt uncomfortable doing it.

The natural part of me often gets lost or abandoned when it's converted into limited symbols and images. When I think about that, it hurts, it gets me angry.

The name I was given at birth is actually a label applied to my being. I'm so attached to it that demeaning it can make me feel bad...yet I'm so much more than simply a label.

As my language and reasoning skills recognize all the components of this activity more fully, I understand it and can therefore enjoy it rather than have it confuse or control me.

Interact B.

Point your hand skyward and forward of you. Now slowly move your feet and your body so that your pointing hand moves in a clockwise motion. While maintaining this motion, look down at your feet and notice that they too are turning clockwise. *Your reactions:*

Section B. Participants' reactions:

My arm and feet are turning the same way! What's going on anyhow?

I'm surprised but I'm not sure why.

By more fully becoming part of the whole action rather than an observer of it, what I see, think and feel becomes unified.

When I unified with my arm's motion, the clockwise -counterclockwise conflict disappeared.

This reminds me of how unified it feels to swing with my partner at a contra dance. We really feel good, all thoughts and senses are on go, it's like we are a spiral galaxy in space.

People dancing in a circle all have a common, non-conflict perception of their direction.

This activity is very misleading because while we enjoy ourselves as whole, an observer's view of us is quite different. We can feel unified like a gang of outlaws and do destructive things.

Activity Summary: At any given moment our relationships are usually in one of the above described postures:

Interact A: Relating through the wisdom gained by incorporating Interacts B, C, and D.

Interact B: Being whole and unified to the exclusion of outside observers and our effects.

Interact C: Non-verbal sensing and feeling ways of knowing.

Interact D: Language-reasoning knowledge which is subject to divisions, labels and shortcomings of biased conceptual schemes and belief systems such as clockwise-counterclockwise.

Are you only physically separated from *Us?* Not only are we, on average, wrangled to spend over 95% of our lives indoors, we are often wrangled to spend over 99% of our lives vicariously knowing about *Us* and the world through abstracts, words, symbols and images like clockwise-counterclockwise. Our required formal education alone consists of 18,000 childhood hours in schoolwork mostly spent in languaged "3 R's" indoor classroom learning. With that kind of conditioning for us to overcome, no doubt Buster will teach himself how to get off his rein much faster than we will learn to beneficially relate to us.

When used exclusively and habitually, our language extremely separates us from the natural world within and about us. In the natural world, *Us* is a moving arm, a non-language, sensory, immediate way of knowing, relating and being that we are born with. Too often we're wrangled to know it by its label rather than by the good feelings from its embrace.

Food for thought. At birth, from 4 billion years of life on Earth growing into becoming us, we naturally know how to move our arm. Our language-directed lives too often lose sight not only of the ingenious natural value and comfortable feeling of our moving arm, but of our wise and wonderful natural selves and the environment. If we want to live with less stress and conflict, less separated from *Us,* then it makes sense to continuously acknowledge nature's presence and plight in our thinking and language. Our words are our destiny. Our language and concepts must connect us with *Us*, the whole of life, its non-languaged wisdom and spirit.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"Our extreme indoor upbringing brainwashes us to its limited ways and perceptions." - **Kathy Reston**

Chapter 10
Programmed Perception

I drove to work across 181st Street daily for three years. They gave me the traffic ticket because earlier that day they changed the sign there saying "Right turn on red" to "No turn on red." I had turned on red. I pleaded guilty with an explanation, but they fined me anyhow.

Mom was pregnant with me when the Depression hit in 1929, and Dad had just opened his own business. Times were worrisome. There was enough love in the family for me, but it wore very thin when my brother arrived two years later. I'm told I welcomed him by scratching him with a hairpin until Mom caught me. Somehow, just being me was not right, not good enough. I was attracted to climbing trees, fishing, campfires with songs and stories, swimming, playing in the woods, and building things. Each of these usually turned out to be wrong even though they felt perfectly okay when I did them.

I could never understand why I was bad. My friend's explanation for it was that we are all born sinners, but my parents refuted that story. They said that in time, I'd learn to be good.

Although it stared me in the face, I could never see that all us city kids were the victims of a war that deprived us of sufficient love and sensory fulfillment for our natural attractions. Too many other war-things demanded my energies, like being wrangled and boxed up in school and homework for most of each day, getting my allowance, not trespassing, obeying the law, not interfering with adults or their business. Without seeing the war, it appeared that parents, teachers, and the law were not wranglers, they were always right, and we were always wrong. Oh sure, there were some "good" kids, but they were usually uptight and not much fun. However, they gained far more approval that I did, so, with reluctance and pressure, I began to become one of them. It was OK, but if I had known about the war and the reason for it, I might have resisted longer and retained some self-respect for doing so. Today, when I'm under stress, my old lack of self-respect is re-awakened. Relieving the stress puts it back to sleep.

Sometimes the following paragraphs have helped my workshop participants understand why they can't see the undeclared war that adversely affects their lives. Without having sensory activities to guide me, it took me 15 years continuously living in natural areas to learn to perceive the wisdom and peace of *Us* and to recognize that it existed as a seamless continuum throughout the natural world and people. By following this book's instructions, most participants learn to perceive and incorporate it in less than a year.

When you were a child learning to read, you began by learning the the letters of the alphabet. Their fascinating shapes and sounds caught your attention. Yet as you now read this paragraph, you pay attention to to its meaning, words and and phrases, not to its individual l-e-t-t-e-r-s. Now that I bring this to your attention, you might begin to focus on individual letters again. "Less important" words disappear as well. Did you notice that I doubled the word "to" "the" and "and" in some of the above sentences?

Are you fully perceiving right now? Try the following activity: Shut your right eye and notice that you can see your nose. Now shut your left eye and again notice you can see your nose. As you read these words, you have learned to pay attention to them, not to your nose, yet you always see it. No matter where you look, your nose is always part of what you see. We disregard it because we have been taught it's not important,

we learn to keep our nose out of the picture. And no doubt, at this point you again only see words and phrases, not individual letters. Perceptual habits are hard to break. People who wear eyeglasses usually see through them without noticing that they see them.

As a university student, I studied bird life in a canyon for a week. Our instructor told us that the following week our class would study reptiles in the same canyon. This surprised us, for we had seen no reptiles there, only birds. The following week we focused on the ground, rather than on the trees and sky, and we saw reptiles. Meanwhile, recreational hikers and poets in the canyon during this same period told us that they saw reptiles and birds as well as beauty and most everything else, including themselves. They said they focused on the canyon's beauty and attractions.

Perhaps you heard about Amanda Brown, the Sunday school teacher, who was caught in her house as floodwaters began to rise. She said, "No thank you, God will save me," to each of the would-be rescuers who came at first by car, then by boat and finally by helicopter to pull her from the roof of her sinking house. Trusting that the Lord would indeed save her, she refused to go with any of them. Sadly, Amanda drowned. Upon entering heaven she admonished God for not helping her, she who had always praised and trusted Him. "Don't blame me," God responded, "I sent you a car, a boat and a helicopter."

Try to remember the name *Amanda Brown,* for I will refer to her plight in later chapters.

Write your reactions to these paragraphs here:

Please review Section B instructions found on page 35.

Section B. Participant's reactions:

I remember that as a kid, I didn't want to be in school, but that I had no choice.

Our culture applauds certain of our tendencies and denounces others.

What I really thought and felt as a kid was seldom appreciated. What society tells us is important molds our perceptions of the world.

When I pay attention or give value to one thing, other things disappear from my awareness.

Most learning centers around seeing, thinking and language. The poets and hikers in the canyon were using many other senses as well.

Since the natural world came first, it is an act of God and a means to become familiar with God. We're just never taught that.

I didn't spend nearly as much time in school discovering what was attractive to me as I did learning the skills of literacy and reasoning.

We become wranglered instruments of our indoor upbringing's outlooks and bias.

As an adult, I have been wranglered out of a lot of the fun, curiosity and creativity of my childhood.

Being brought up in indoor environments and thinking blinds us to the natural world.

As kids, we are trained into being the kind of adults we become. My inner nature was very neglected.

We are as blind to the causes of our problems as we are to individual letters.

There is a very attractive world out there that is invisible to us because of our conditioning.

We're like Amanda Brown. We can't see the war against us because its often called "progress" or "economics".....or development, you know, "improving the land."

We don't see nature's values because we give them demeaning names like "illiterate," "uncivilized" "emotional response" or "subjective."

God as we know Him/Her is a product of our indoor world. People(s) who live close to Nature know God differently than we do.

Unless *Us* brings itself into our awareness, who else can do it?

How can your focus find *Us?* We are born happily knowing the natural whole of life. It consists of far more than just our indoor world and its ways. Our nature-separated society is but a split second in nature's millennium, yet it powerfully limits our focus. To enjoy the natural world within and around us, we must persistently seek and follow natural things that attract us. Through them, *Us* expresses itself and reaches us.

Food for thought. How can we ever see how we act if our eye can see the world around it, but it can't see itself.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"Language can become a screen which stands between the thinker and reality." - **Arthur Koestler**

Chapter 11
Facts of Life

"Apply scientific logic," I said to my Native American friend, "All the bears that live above the Arctic Circle are white. Therefore, if you are in the Arctic and you see a bear, you know that it will be white." He looked puzzled. "I don't know that," he replied, "I've never even been above the Arctic Circle." He thought for a second and then asked: "Have you seen all the bears that live above the Arctic Circle?"

"I commit to the people in this workshop that I will, to the best of my ability, share with them experiences, reactions, or questions I have while doing these nature activities," said Audrey, followed by Tim, Irene, John and the rest of the 14 workshop members, including myself. "Thank you," we responded, each time. That commitment along with thanks and support for it, helps our workshops succeed. It enables each of us to safely become involved with the wisdom of *Us* that lies in ourselves and each other. The commitment is also important because our indoor society largely conditions us to believe what people say, rather than believe the facts of our non-language experiences in natural areas and in ourselves. Both are needed to enjoy the wisdom of *Us*.

Honest questions seldom wrangle you because they ask you to think for yourself. Workshop facilitators ask participants "Are we going to trust what we share with each other?" "What do we trust?" Participants' reactions boil down to "We trust the facts of logic, material things, and sane, literate people; we're suspicious of our own feelings and the claims of others, especially if they're extreme, demented or illiterate people." The following activity helps you to inventory what you think a fact is.

What is a fact? *Write your response here:*

Please review Section B instructions found on page 35.

Section B. Participant's reactions:

An experience.

Something that's logical, repeatable or predictable.

A statement that's culturally acceptable."

Something a respected, knowledgeable person verifies.

A thing I can quantify or qualify.

A thing I can sense.

Something I believe to be true or reliable.

Something that is.

An act of nature.

Us is a fact.

A cause-effect phenomenon that I can validate.

The commitment and presence of my 12-step community.

How can you evaluate a fact? To a person living in a closet, facts mostly reflect experiences limited to the closet environment and closeted thinking. In the ever changing outside environment, facts become difficult to establish. We may best recognize them by their short and long term effects rather than by their promises.

Food for thought. A fact here and now is that you, the reader, have no idea about the backgrounds and experiences of the workshop participants I quote in this book. I don't reveal them because if I did, they might wrangle you and you might react differently to them. For example, we perceive statements differently if we knew that they come from a group of highly educated, paid and respected professional people rather than from a group of little children, extremists, and emotionally disturbed individuals. *What's important is what you personally think and feel about the statements made, not so much the status of the person who said them.* For this reason it is worth considering the following unusual definitions of a fact:

A fact is an event that we put into words and say they are believable.

A fact is a multi-sensory, non-wranglering experience.

A fact states some wisdom of *Us*.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"The senses, being the explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge." - **Maria Montessori**

Chapter 12
A Trustable Foundation

The winter and spring were extraordinarily warm this year. Somehow, even though they winter in South America, the hummingbirds knew to arrive earlier than usual.

I watched it happen with amazement and envy. My brother, John, found a way to identify, escape and disarm those who wrangled him to war against *Us*. At the age of five, he expressed strong attractions for painting. My parents and community supported it in every possible way and, in time, it became his arena. Through his drawing and photography, he expertly expressed many aspects of himself and gained admiration in so doing. In art, he found a niche from judgement by society, for when people asked him "What are you drawing?" he could unequivocally answer, "Whatever it comes out to be," and gain approval. His inner child had discovered a playground that expressed it and immunized it from criticism, threats and abuse. Then it did one better. When John completed a painting and people asked him what it was, he would reply, "What do you see in it?" Even wranglers would tell him what they saw and he'd simply confirm that was exactly what it was. Still today, on this he makes a living! Although often tried, he has never faltered from that path. It has led him to become a deeply committed, sensitive, contributing human being. He beautifully expresses peace with *Us*, for his many sensitivities bathe him in *Us*. This has made the two of us very close for we hold *Us* in common.

The following activity workshop begins by stating: "We need to find something we can trust in common so that we have a trustable foundation for our relationships in this workshop and in our relationships anywhere." Once participants agree that this is sensible, they do as follows:

Pinch yourself 4 times consecutively. Then validate that you actually feel something each time you pinch yourself. *Write your validation here:*

Answer the following questions:

Do you trust what you feel?
Is the feeling real?
If you pinched yourself again, do you trust that you would feel something again? Test it. Try it.
As you watch other people pinch themselves, do you trust them when they say that they feel something?
Have you been able to feel as far back as you can remember?"
Do you trust that if you pinched somebody else, they would feel something?
Do you believe that when people who lived 10,000 years ago pinched themselves, they would feel something?
Do you believe that a tribal person in New Guinea or a businessman in India would feel something if they pinched themselves?
Do you trust that a dog or a deer senses something when you pinch it hard enough?
Write your reactions here:

Please review Section B instructions found on page 35.

Section B. Participants' reactions:

I was happy to see each person here answered yes to each question. It said that we are all sensitive people. It helped me trust and feel a unity in this workshop gathering.

I discovered that I often take my ability to feel for granted, yet I share feeling with people everywhere.

Actually, I trust my ability to feel more than I trust most anything else.

If I didn't have feelings I'd probably be dead or paralyzed.

Without feelings, maybe I'd be a book or a machine, maybe a pile of equations.

Sensitivity is universal and trustable.

Natural senses tell you something even though they don't speak a language. We feel them and their message, for example: hunger tells us to eat.

Natural senses are expressions of *Us*.

Are your natural feelings facts of fantasy? Senses are experiences. By definition, all sentient beings have them. They are a non-verbal way of knowing and being that spans cultures, geography, species and time. "I *feel* therefore I am" makes as much sense as "I think therefore I am." It can truly be said that *"We are or become what we feel."* because our feelings often guide us. In fact, senses and feelings are facts. They are facts of life, part of *Us*.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"The original sin is to limit the desire to be. Don't." - **Unknown**

Chapter 13
The Law of *Us*

I listened for the softest sound in this vast wilderness expanse. In time, I could hear the silence of everything harmonizing and my heartbeat drummed its rhythm.

I began to bite my fingernails after I left elementary school, for in junior high school the war to subdivide me intensified and further stressed me. The junior high school classroom was no longer a community. Rather it was five different periods a day of 35 people I often didn't know. We sat in one room after another in order to be wrangled and indoctrinated with a subject. What we learned one period seldom connected with the next period's subject. The situation internally and externally subdivided most students. No course taught us how to hold ourselves together. Self-destructive, identity-seeking, anti-social behavior pervaded the school and streets. Finally, our family moved to a new area to escape the ball-kicking, anti-Jewish sentiment of some kids who somehow blamed us for killing Jesus Christ. But in the new neighborhood, I knew nobody and felt isolated. My grades went down, my nail-biting intensified,

Fifteen years later, at the age of 26, I was a Graduate student in Guidance Counseling. I entered a control therapy group. The problem I choose to address in it was my nail biting. The therapy experience was invaluable, yet I left it three years later still biting my nails. The only time I stopped biting them was when I became a professional folk singer, a lifetime desire come true. Finally, part of me, my deep musical attractions and expression, gained fulfillment. As a musician, I needed the nails on my right hand to play the guitar, so without any effort I taught myself to only bite the nails on my left hand. From that experience I learned that *sensory fulfillment could catalyze recovery.* I had provided myself with space that allowed *Us,* my inner desire to be more complete, to express itself. Once I learned and applied that secret, good things began to happen for me.

When they invented metal fingerpicks for guitar players, I used them and I returned to biting my right hand nails again. I gained fulfillment by using an artificial finger protection technology, so the natural sensory support necessary for the health of my fingers and my musical fulfillment disconnected and disappeared. By using fingerpicks, I lost some wholeness. I still use them, and I still bite my nails.

In retrospect, a key incident in my life occurred when my friends and I rollicked at old time square dances in Woodstock, New York, 1948. The community spirit there was optimum, multi-sensory fulfillment high and the temperature hot. I drank a beer just to cool down, my first beer. Within fifteen minutes my coordination disappeared and I had to stop dancing. Alcohol deprived me of the joy in my life. I said "Screw this" and its never happened again. The process repeated itself when I smoked my first cigarette. I happened to see my reflection smoking in a full length mirror. I didn't like what I saw. It wasn't the naturally fulfilled me that I knew. Rather, it looked like one of the many hurting, frustrated kids I knew desperately seeking sensory fulfillment. I never smoked again. Today, cigarettes, alcohol and drugs don't wrangle me. I gain balanced multi-sensory satisfaction any time I want by painstakingly seeking and gratifying *all* my natural attractions.

My love affair with natural attractions reminds me of when I lived in New York City, and for three days the electricity was out. During that short period, people became much more whole. They were more interdependent which triggered them into being more open, friendly, and supportive. That wholeness stopped when the electricity returned. But nine months later, for a short period, the birth rate rose significantly.

The following activities help us find the wholeness of *Us* that we desperately need. At our birth, it was our heritage, but we each lost it in the war.

Think about when in your life you felt you were closest to attractive natural sensations, to *Us* as you know *Us* to be. Find the similarities between your experiences with *Us* and the information in this chapter. *Write your experience(s) here:*

In order to demonstrate a property of the material world in which we live, hold the end of a pencil between your thumb and second finger. While vibrating the pencil back and forth vigorously, as if it was a super-speedy windshield wiper, attempt to pass your other hand through the vibrating pencil area. *Write you reactions here:*

Please review Section B instructions found on page 35

Section B. Participants' reactions:

The moving pencil covered the area so quickly that no matter where I put my hand, the pencil hit it immediately. It was like the pencil was always there.

The moving pencil area felt like a vibrating solid object.

It was like trying to put your hand through the blades of a fan. You can only do it when the fan is not moving. Once the blades rotate, they form an integrated barrier. It's as if the moving fan blades become a solid object, and the faster they move, the more solid they become.

Are there laws of *Us* that you can use to your advantage? "The beginning of wisdom is calling things by their right name," said Confucious. Using this moving pencil activity as a working model, let me share with you the **Law of *Us***, a process of wholeness and nature that my thirty years of counseling, living and learning in natural areas taught me. The Law of *Us* gives the right name to our indoor lives. Apply it to places or people, and things change for the better. It's different than the wrangling of "clockwise-counterclockwise" in that it incorporates and respects the wholeness of 14 billion years of evolving life processes which we and the planet manifest.

The Law of *Us* is very important, for today over 70% of the American population is excessively stressed. They and Planet Earth seek restoration. Masses of people feel wrangled, off-center and hurt. They crave and deserve responsible guidance and change in their personal lives as well as in the quality of their environment. The Law of *Us* helps them find it.

Uniquely, the Law of *Us* holds true for all members of the plant, animal and mineral kingdom; sub-atomic particles, redwood forests, oceans and people. It states:

At any given moment:

-Everything desires to be. -Everything has attractions and is attractive. -Everything is interconnected.

Everything desires to be: Translation: everything is a being. According to modern physics, in the beginning of this universe, an annihilating struggle (the Big Bang?), took place between matter (material existence) and anti-matter. "The desire *to be* of a small amount of matter won its fight *to be* as matter. That small amount of matter is all the matter that makes up our material universe," noted Albert Einstein* and Noble Prize winner George Wald (14). A vast majority of the universe is non-material. *But the material world as we know it, including people, expresses and is an ongoing desire* ***to be*** itself.

Scientifically describing the physical world as an expression of a desire *to be*, makes the physical universe a drive. It is a sense, a verb, an immediate motivated action. Survival is not just an accidental, random, mechanical, physical force. *Existence and growth at every level have a direction, meaning and purpose; to survive,* ***to be*** *with more stability and security.* This is our universe's underlying energy. In the above activity, you can think of it as the energy that vibrates the pencil or moves the fan blades .

Often when it comes to understanding such speculative matters we say, "Only God knows." "In God we trust." Interestingly, research discloses that in 1700 BC, as nature-gods and idols became taboo, our civilization's one original One-God was called YHWH (Yahweh) which means *The One Who Is.* Language experts say the word YHWH identifies "The one who has no name". It is a form of the ancient Sanskrit verb *to be* .[50] Yahweh was, or expressed the original desire *to be*.

It is no coincidence that the early bible says in Exodus 3-14 that Moses asked God to identify him or herself, and God said to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM...Tell the children of Israel "I AM" sent you to them." *I am* is part of the verb *To Be*. Suzuki Rashi says, "God is being itself, to let ourselves be is to enter into union with God." You see, it is not simply by chance that we call ourselves human *being*. And, as is demonstrated by the global life community not using language, and by us silently waving our arms even at birth, ***being*** *is not necessarily a language experience.* The universe *is* and knows itself without using words, concepts or explanations. *Us* manifests itself through non-verbal wisdom.

Everything has attractions and is attractive: Translation: every *being* wants to continually form relationships with its surroundings. *The more supportive relationships a being has, the more stable and secure is its being.* In reality, all things are actually relationship events. They are *beings* in the now of the present moment. Each being grows through attractions into more complex and diverse beings in order *to be* with more stability. As matter creates additional stabilizing attraction relationships, the universe harmoniously becomes more attractive, secure, diverse and complex.

Since its birth some 14 billion years ago, the original material universe has continually diversified. Its attractions have grown beings we call sub-atomic particles, atoms, molecules, atmosphere, oceans, trees, mountains, species, people, weather systems, etc. All things are beings. They consist mostly, if not entirely, of atomic space filled with attraction energies, For example, if you squeezed the attraction energy forces out of a mountain range, you would reduce the entire range to the size of a neutron. Each "thing" is sensitive to new attractions. Each grows, diversifies (14:72) and vibrates the universe's minuscule amount of matter like a vibrating pencil.

Everything is interconnected: Translation: Every being, including minerals, is always attracted directly, or by attraction chains, to every other being. Without having some form of attractive connections, beings can't grow or relate to each other. What we call repulsions, or negatives, are actually beings attracted to more stable

relationships that we don't immediately recognize.

Considerations: *Us* is. The Law of *Us* identifies the origins of *Us*. It says that *Us* is Yahweh's desire *to be* as *Us*.

How can you tell if the Law of *Us* is true? A substantiation of the accuracy of the Law of *Us* lies in the fact that the natural world functions without producing garbage. This is not an accident. Rather, it's because everything grows from attractions to everything else. Everything is attractive including each of us. Nothing is rejected, unwanted, negative, unattractive or unnecessary, so there's no such thing as garbage or waste. Another substantiation lies in the fact that when you make a value judgement about *Us* and remove what appears to be a detrimental part of *Us*, —for example, a predator,— the total community in time deteriorates rather than improves. Again, this insinuates that everything is attractive, wanted and needed.

How does the Law of *Us* pertain to you? Let us now apply the Law of *Us* to people. Every person is that part of the universal desire *to be*, which, through natural attractions, has, over the ages, evolved and materialized itself as people. We personify the desire *to be*. We sense that we matter because we are matter. We mainly consist of attraction forces

Our desire *to be* is a trustable feeling or emotion we call *survival*. We each fulfill our desire *to be* by forming unique stabilizing, supportive vibrating relationships through our natural attractions to other beings, human and/or non-human. *Every natural attraction helps support, stabilize and secure our being.* That's why satisfying our attractions feels good to us, why we enjoy them. This attractive relationship and growth process, on some level, is the same process used by every other species (55).

How can the Law of *Us* improve your thinking? For the many of us who, at least in part, experience the natural world spiritually, the Law of *Us* suggests an updated creation story. The story amalgamates spirit, science and psychology. Because it supports multi-sensory holism and process it doesn't wrangle us. It says:

> About 14 billion years ago, Yahweh, the most attractive Being, observed that there was room for still another universe. Because Yahweh the Creator desired this new universe to be, it materialized. That's how and why it is. Being of, by and from an attractive God, an all-knowing Higher Power, our universe wisely, attractively creates, expresses and stabilizes through attractions. Its very nature and attractiveness is both the Great Spirit's wisdom and His/Her love for it to be.

Food for thought: Noble laureate George Wald notes that Mind has always existed as a source and condition of physical reality. Every day, reasoning minds gather evidence which converges to confirm this creation story. Physicists now demonstrate that differing basic attraction forces are unified into a single force when placed in environments that simulate the conditions of 14 billion years ago, the date of this universe's origin. *Researcher's find that most of the material world actually consists of vibrating attraction forces and energies which hold matter together. Some suggest that all the material matter that makes up this universe could be put into a space smaller than a house.* Thus, the material world, including ourselves, is like a vibrating pencil. It largely consists of space throbbing with energies, waves, particles and other unseen attraction forces that make being possible. To our cost, just as Amanda Brown did not recognize acts of God, our culture's survival story seldom recognizes our natural attractions, the substance of *Us*.

My 30 years camping in natural areas throughout the seasons caution me to avoid the words that attempt to define God. Too often, those words are conflicting, disintegrating, wranglering, clockwise - counterclockwise traps rather than unifying forces. If God is "The One who has no name" "I am" and/or "The felt desire *to be*", He/She is not a wrangler. He/She can be known as *Us* ,the natural, immediate, attractive, sentient part of us that we can feel but which defies description. For this reason, a good way to find *Us* is to validate and embrace the many things we *naturally* sense and feel. They are parts of *Us* that we too often overlook.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

*Albert Einstein felt that we experience an optical delusion of consciousness that restrictively separates us from the whole. He said, "I didn't arrive at an understanding of these fundemental laws of the universe through my rational mind." "The foundation for inner security is...to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty." It is significant that Dr. Einstein never learned to talk until he was age three; it means that he spent several extra non-languaged years with *Us*. Studies by Margaret Mead suggest that most geniuses have in common, intense nature experiences as part

***"Sometimes when we exercise our intuition, we experience a deeply satisfying sense of having done things right."* - C.G. Jung**

Chapter 14
The Work of Genius

The Amish farmer performed a miracle. It was 1989, yet he happily and healthfully raised a family of 9 on less than $3,000 a year while the topsoil in his fields increased.

In April, 1959, I sat in the heart of New York City's noise, crowds and fumes. Bathed in the flickering light of a fluorescent lamp, I stared at the plaster wall of my windowless office in the basement of the Whitney Museum. This was day number 562, hour number 6, minute 27 of my job as the director of this outdoor education and recreation organization. "Every one of the last 562 days, I've spent here," I said to myself. I wondered, "Is this really utopia?" "Must be," came my answer. "This job reflects my doctoral work and course work in biology, education, and counseling. It challenges my teaching, guidance, music, writing and camping experiences. And the pay is excellent. Oh, yes, this must be utopia. After all these years of preparation, it's got to be." "SO HOW COME IT DOESN'T FEEL GOOD?" shouted a new, bright voice. "HOW COME THOSE PILES OF PAPERWORK DON'T EXCITE THE HELL OUT OF YOU?" it screamed.

I recognized that shout. It was the voice of left-handed me. In elementary school it insisted that I could and should write with my left hand, and it made it happen, too. That voice hadn't said much since then. The wranglers and war maimed it during my high school and college years. It might have completely died had not a few teachers, therapists and folk dance groups occasionally rescued it. "COME ON," it now urged, "PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER. YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS FOR OTHERS AS WELL AS FOR YOURSELF. NOW, GET WITH IT." The voice bounced around within me awhile. I realized that I trusted it. It was right again. It didn't fail me during elementary school, so why not heed it now?

That voice was a genius. It still is. I validated it and followed its wisdom. The outcome of so doing, I describe in Chapter 4. Each of us can hear that voice. It is part of *Us* conveying the wisdom of *Us*. It commands that for our health and welfare we *be* all that we *naturally* can be; we fulfill our natural attractions and thereby comply with the Law of *Us*. The following activity will help you recognize the wisdom of that voice. *Go to a natural area or thing that attracts you, and there read the following amazing scenario.*

You are watching the mud flats of a tidal bay (or some other natural place). Suddenly, inexplicably, the land in one area begins to move and rearrange itself. It builds itself into a combination air pump-oven-engine apparatus. The pump portion draws in air from the atmosphere; the oven burns the air and produces heat and energy which run the engine; the pump exhausts away the fumes from the fire.

Unbelievably, when the oven fire gets too low or high to run the engine properly, the air pump automatically works faster or slower to keep the temperature optimum. When too much smoke accumulates, the pump

automatically works faster to get rid of it. When the apparatus breaks down, it automatically repairs itself.

Miraculously, the amazing apparatus has the ability to send you a signal you can sense. As you sit watching it, *you can feel* if it should turn on or off, or go faster or slower. *You can feel* if the engine fire needs more or less air, furthermore, the feeling attracts you to make it do so. Even more astounding, you *can sense and/ or decide* if you want the apparatus to go faster or slower and it will do so.

Obviously, the apparatus is genius in action. It miraculously desired to build itself and then actually did. In addition, it regulated and regenerated itself. Perhaps its greatest genius lies in having invented *the means for you to sense and feel* the energies, relationships and balances within its workings.

Write your reactions here:

Please review Section B instructions found on page 5.

Section B. Participants' reactions:

Is the scenario true?

Only God could make a machine like that.

It's incredibly complex. Who invented it?

Is it done by computer?

I'm overwhelmed.

It sounds like its describing what happens when we breathe.

It's *Us* in action, and it's happening inside me.

Every living thing, even a bacterium, can do that to some extent.

Are you an unrecognized Genius? As fantastic as this scenario seems, none of it is fantasy. Rather, it describes just one of many natural life miracles we enjoy. We call it *respiration* (*re-spiriting*). When the pump stops working, we experience uncomfortable feelings of suffocation. They motivate us to start breathing, to get the air pump working again. The same thing happens when we build up too many exhaust fumes. We can also simply think about breathing faster or slower and do so.

There are many other natural life systems and senses that sustain their own lives, our lives and all of life. The wisdom of *Us* manifests them within and through the evolved relationships of microorganisms and minerals. Although without microscopes, we can't see these minuscule *desires to be* at work, we can sense and feel them working because we inherit them. They are part of our biology, physiology and metabolism. In conjunction with each other, these systems and sensitivities make up *Us*, the global life system and our personal being. They catalyze the natural world's genius to approach perfection, to sustain an optimum of life and diversity without garbage, war or insanity; without pollution or excessive stress and violence. In this respect, these interacting life systems provide an excellent model to imitate. With practice, people have learned to enjoy each of these natural senses and functions and thereby enjoy their ingenious balance, harmony and peace.

Considerations: The creative ability for anything to organize, preserve and regenerate itself goes far beyond the limits of any known computer or brain. To do it, a computer would have to be far more complex than the human brain which alone contains a hundred trillion synapses. Just to accomplish a simple act like pay attention to the meaning of a picture would require a computer the size of a building many stories high. For a computer to be able to organize, preserve and regenerate itself would require a computer consisting of many cities filled with such buildings. Yet a simple microorganism accomplishes this feat and in addition harmonically coordinates it with the welfare of the global life community.

It helps us to understand this phenomenon when we realize that any organism or thing evolves as, and almost entirely consists of, different attraction energies, sensitivities and forces which bind and vibrate only a minuscule amount of matter. In the Law of *Us* these energies are the binding attraction forces that allow matter "to be" with greater stability and longevity by forming relationships (See chapter 11).

Section B. Participants' Reactions:

The complexity of the many simple senses and functions that we take for granted boggles the mind.

This helps explain why life becomes a "God thing." Who else could figure it out?

The Law of *Us* is the most reasonable explanation I've ever heard for this kind of genius. The desire *to be* attracts every aspect of the global life system to participate in their common survival. No wonder nature has no garbage. Everything counts. Everything is important, including me.

If all this wisdom can be found in a microorganism, it must also be found in us. Why isn't it working in me? I can't pass algebra.

Now I can see how subdividing the whole of life can cause problems.

No wonder Thoreau said "In wildness is the preservation of the world."

How can anybody believe that such complexity is just an accident? It must have purpose and direction if it's lasted for 14 billion years.

The system has no spoken language so we ignore it. It's interesting that Albert Einstein didn't talk until he was 3 years old.

Why didn't my inherent intelligence keep me away from drugs?

The system is the wisdom of *Us* in action. I can see why its trustable.

Food for thought. Think about Charles Boyle's concept: "If the model of any natural system requires intelligence for its creation and its working, the real natural system requires at least as much intelligence for its own creation and working."

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

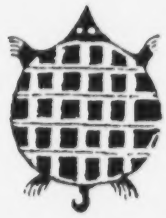
Section Three

CONNECTING WITH *US*

How and Why Nature Teaches Inner Peace

"Each new achievement is a crisis in self-esteem." - **Eric Hoffer**

Chapter 15
The Nature of Abandonment



The study showed that when he placed a rock on the smooth dirt road and a car hit it, the car would land hard and create a depression. This new depression affected each following car. Each car further depressed it and added to it. The depression repeated itself with new depressions. They grew; within a year, the whole road became washboard.

When I was seven, on a sultry summer day, my camp friends and I gathered around the deep inlet to the camp lake. I sat leaning against the birch log guard rail which was rotten under the bark. The log broke and I fell in the water. I could hardly swim, just enough to keep myself afloat. My friends screamed but couldn't reach me. Their arms were just inches too short and no adult was around.

For about three minutes nothing supported my life except me. I was abandoned and desperate. I gulped water and struggled helplessly. Suddenly a counselor's arm grabbed my hair and pulled me out. His reward was that I vomited all over him.

When the camp director asked me what happened, hysterically I said my friends had pushed me in. They denied it. I knew they hadn't, but somebody had to be at fault and it wasn't me. "I didn't want to fall in, it wasn't my idea," my inner child said. I was only seven, but the wranglers had already taught me that when things went wrong, some person, not the war, was to blame and it usually was me. I felt I was bad, even though my inner child knew I wasn't. "Don't even think of blaming me," it said. But, if not me, who? It had to be somebody, where was somebody who would stand up for me and say it wasn't my fault? Where was support for me?

Without realizing that somebody had neglected to maintain the bridge, I knowingly blamed the incident on my friends. I became a wrangler. It felt okay to do so because it stopped the war in me from attacking me. That night, our counselor had us talk about *how we felt* about the drowning incident. The discussion brought the non-language world, the wisdom of *Us* into consciousness, We spoke what we felt. How we felt let us feel for each other. It empowered us to safely make amends to each other. Everybody involved gave themselves credit for doing so, and we remained friends. However, nobody recognized, no less celebrated, the service that the feelingful wisdom of *Us* had performed for us.

Fifty-one years later I sat watching snow-covered mountains shimmer in a mountain lake's reflections and the drowning incident came to mind. Suddenly, it struck me why I didn't die. *I was never abandoned.* My attractions to life urged me to swim, to support myself for three minutes. The coordinated motions of flailing hands, feet and body supported me. The water supported me too, as did my friends' who cried for help, the counselor, and the camp director who blamed nobody, including the rotting log. "Rotting is nature's way," he said. "If the log had fallen close to you, it would have supported you and saved you." All that unrecognized support was *Us*, the global life community's *desire to be,* in action.

Abandonment feelings lie behind most of our problems. Like the hole in the road, once we get them we pass them on to those we love by not being able to love them in areas where we hurt. The following activity helps us see their effects and how they arise from our undeclared war against nature, not from nature's alleged cruelty.

Go to an attractive natural area or thing and:

1. Acknowledge that at this moment, as you breathe, you feel comfortable because you are connected to and in balance with the atmosphere.
2. Separate from the atmosphere by exhaling and holding your breath.
3. Almost immediately, an inborn-felt respiratory sense detects the separation. You begin to feel the tensions of suffocation. They attract you to re-connect.
4. Acknowledge that suffocation feelings attract you to air, not to water, food or entertainment. Suffocation tells you to breathe the atmosphere.
5. Re-connect with the atmosphere by breathing. As your tension relaxes, you regain the comfort of equilibrium. *Write your reactions here*:

Please review Section B instructions found on page 35

Section B. Participants' reactions:

My suffocation tension spoke as pain, it wrangled me to breathe.

Senses like suffocation are connectors, they attract me to life.

I became aware of how specifically my senses connect me to the natural world.

My attraction to the atmosphere increased immensely.

When I held my breath I felt like a fish out of water because I had disconnected from the survival genius of the respiration process.

The separation made me feel how much I am part of the environment and utterly dependent on it. It's a healthy co-dependency.

My tension and stress feelings are essential for my life, they guide survival.

Life in all its magnificence was right there touching me, and just two simple little words 'Don't breathe' separated me from it.

Air and suffocation feelings are a marriage.

Connecting produced equilibrium.

Breathing is the wisdom of *Us* doing its thing right in front of our eyes.

I feel very strange right now because even though it feels really helpful to hear your reactions, I think that deep inside I've always known what you're saying.

Repeat the activity, but this time imagine that some dominant wrangler will not let you inhale ever again. As you experience not being allowed to inhale, your inner child (inner nature) senses some form of abandonment. *Write your reactions here:*

Participants' reactions:

I was permanently disconnected from life and I panicked.

I became outraged that I was not allowed to breathe.

Abandonment hurts, it signals separation and death.

Connecting with *Us* is survival.

Abandonment feels like hopelessness, you think you are being murdered.

It's a powerful desperate emotion.

I'm utterly dependent upon the natural world for survival.

The wranglering statement 'Don't breathe' held my life in its hands.
I felt sad to see myself go.

I discovered that the natural world wants me alive; although my will said don't breathe, nature made me breathe anyhow.

Somehow, it brought back memories of when I was a kid and how upset my mother would get with me when I was enjoying something muddy, or a slug. Even today when I get excited about something free and natural, I expect to end up in tears.

Separating kids from natural attractions is what causes them to cry.

Repeat the experience again. However, this time use a 4" x 3/4" plastic tube, (or rolled paper) which you use as a straw or snorkel. You may breathe through it whenever you so desire.
Write your reactions here:

Section B. Participants' reactions:

The tube was like a lifesaver.

The situation coerced me to use the tube.

To me, the tube represented the wranglering of our artificial, plastic way of life. Rather than breathe freely, we learn to use plastic tubes like windows, ventilation systems and air conditioners.

Making plastic pollutes air and water, plastic is not biodegradable.

My choice was to either use the tube or feel the pain of separation and abandonment.

I feel more natural and healthier breathing without the tube. The air was different, I could smell the plastic as I breathed through it.

If I was brought up only using the tube, why would I ever risk doing otherwise?

I see how I could become addicted to using the tube. It and my survival became identical.

If I became dependent on the tube, I'd bond to it, decorate it and give it some spiritual value. To have to give up the tube would trigger painful abandonment memories.

I became attached to the tube.

To change, I'd need to trust something new. It would be too great a risk to not use the tube without having a trustable replacement for it.

Doing this activity brought back childhood memories of my father making me spell difficult words before I was allowed to pee.

How have you been abandoned? This abandonment activity is not limited to our sense of respiration. It also applies to each of our many other universal survival senses, senses such as *thirst, community, taste, touch, place, hunger, temperature, smell, sight, nurturing, compassion* and *belonging to a greater whole*. For example, with respect to the sense of thirst, the plastic tube represents the dependency of our indoor lives on reservoirs and dams, water purification chemicals, energy used for well drilling, pumping and manufacturing plumbing supplies; aqueducts, pumps, plumbing, plumbers, sinks, drinking glasses, etiquette, septic systems. To a greater or lesser extent the use of each of these artifacts becomes a wranglered, bonded economic and personal dependency. *This is equally true about the words and concepts that urge us to excessively or carelessly use artifacts.* Each word tends to generate a certain amount of pollution, garbage and disturbance in us and the environment. Words that do not connect us with *Us* are like "clockwise" and "counterclockwise." They wrangle our separation from *Us*.

The participant who said, "My choice was to either use the tube or feel abandonment" made an important point. *How do we change our destructive personal, social or environmental ways if confronting problems or changing relationships triggers the discomfort of abandonment emanating from our internal or external wranglers?"*

What do your abandonment feelings tell you about your relationship with *Us*? Abandonment evokes fear and apathy. It disables us. It prevents us from participating in our own lives. It causes our dysfunctions. Our excessive separation from the natural world blinds us from seeing that wranglered separation from *Us* is what we actually feel when we feel abandoned. We feel like something won't allow us *to be*. Being demeaned or disregarded by a person or institution leaves us feeling helpless because we have already emotionally lost our other major life support, the genius, sensation, spirit and omnipresence of *Us*, 14 billion years of growth and survival experience in this universe. *Abandonment feelings always signal a loss of support from some part(s) of Us.* They inform us that a wrangler is at work. They are a cry for us to use the wisdom of *Us* to stop the war against *Us*.

To better sense your true relationship with *Us*, repeat the box activity on page 55 but instead of using a plastic tube, hold on to a plant whenever you desire to breathe. Let go of the plant and stop breathing, hold it again and start breathing again. Repeat this for 15 minutes or more to better sense the connection between you and the plant. Do you sense any difference between holding the plant and holding the plastic tube or roll of paper?

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."
- Oliver Wendall Holmes

Chapter 16
Learning By Sensing

I read while sitting by this spruce. I shut my eyes and my book's words disappear from sight. But I remain aware of the branch I'm holding because I still touch it, smell it, and hear its needles whisper in the wind.

Even though the war against *Us* and its wranglers nearly devastated my inner nature, my parents' and community's great love for me and natural areas enabled me to keep my inherent connections with nature alive. To me, the callings of the natural world were undeniable. They offered unconditional love. They never spoke harsh words.

I felt welcome and acted differently around a campfire than in a classroom. After our daily elementary school classes were over, many cold winter afternoons we'd make small campfires in vacant lots and happily sit around toasting marshmallows or roasting potatoes. The fire itself spoke a language of warmth, motion, smoke, smell, light, sound, chemistry and combustion. Its magic disintegrated burnables, yet it brought us together. Even though I couldn't explain it or sell it, I trusted the magic of the fire far more than any promises ever made to me. It always rang true and dependable. It catalyzed communion and healing among us, even though it said not a word. Best of all, I didn't need to take a course in Fire 101. My body innately understood it. We knew each other as of old.

Then the war raised its ugly head. Some wrangler, somewhere, said that children that play with fire have hidden anger or repressed emotions. Within a week, our campfires changed from a passion to a problem. At home and at school adults expressed concern about them and us. Fortunately, Mother Nature smiled on we eight year olds and took care of the problem one freezing morning. That morning was so cold, Dad offered to drive me to school. He started up the old LaSalle. Through a hole in the dashboard, I could see that the engine was in flames. I screamed. We opened up the hood and while Dad stood helpless, I grabbed the ashes from a nearby ash can. I threw them on the flames and extinguished the fire. I explained to Dad that I knew ashes didn't burn because we had tried to burn them at our campfire the previous week.

We arrived at school late. Dad explained what happened and, in class the teacher had me do "Show and Tell" about the engine fire. Believe me, several times over, my presentation emphasized how I had learned from our campfires that ashes smother fire. After that, I never heard another word of complaint about the fires, other than "You always smell like smoke."

This chapter parallels my campfire experience. It introduces qualities and values of *Us* in the natural world which, like campfires, we seldom acknowledge or validate. Although the war's anti-nature propaganda makes many people disown these qualities, that does not diminish their truth. You can find that truth by trusting what you experience —what you sense and feel— while you do the activities. If you can't trust your experiences, what can you trust? The wrangler?

Holistic hands-on experiences are most reliable. They teach best because they stimulate many senses, many ways of knowing. However, our upbringing trains our senses of *sight*, *language* and *reason* to dominate our awareness. *Too often we only perceive a "clockwise-counterclockwise" world which is devoid of the rest of* ***Us****, our non-*

language being. In order to discover our many other senses, the following activity lets you sense the natural world with your less habitual senses. It asks you to share a natural area with a partner as follows:

In a natural area, hold hands with your partner and without talking, one of you close your eyes. The other person becomes a nature guide. They request that you imagine you've just walked off a spaceship into the unknown. This disconnects your sense of reason, for in your imagination, everything becomes new and different. For five minutes, be led by the guide to sense, touch, feel, taste, smell and occasionally see glimpses of the many different natural parts of this area which the guide selects *because they attract him/her*. The guide can move you close to any natural entity and place you in any position. He/she can focus your head on natural attractions he/she sees and can signal you to open your eyes *only for a second* by squeezing your shoulder, and then releasing it to signal you to close your eyes again. After five minutes switch roles with your guide, and you guide him/her.

Write your reactions here:

Section B. Participants' Reactions:

Participants inventory what they sense and feel as a guide and guided person. Most often, their non-verbal, non-sighted, non-reasoning, non-judgemental experiences in the non-verbal natural world give their other natural senses a chance to come into our awareness.

Through this activity, within ten minutes, a group of participants can collectively document that *they experienced and intensified over 35 different natural sensations and feelings:* warmth, direction, heartbeat, silence, trust, freedom, belonging, thankfulness, contentment, peace, forms, hunger, balance, color, timelessness, beauty, love, motion, direction, compassion, place, nurturing, community, belonging to a greater whole and many more. Each sense is the wisdom of *Us* in action.

Participant's reactions:

Even though I was blindfolded, I could sense there was a tree in front of me.

I sensed land and gravity through my feet.

At first I didn't trust my guide, but trust grew as we continued.

I could tell which direction I was going by the warmth of the sun on my cheek.

I was able to turn off my internal dialog and sense that another world is here around me, one that teaches beyond what I can imagine or express.

I felt responsible for my partner and for showing Nature to its best advantage.

It was fun, it got me out of my head world.

The world felt serene; I wanted to share it with my partner; I sensed a oneness with my partner and nature; I heard and felt more intensely

I would have avoided the gentle stroking of the leaves had my eyes been open.

Being a guide made things stand out, gave them and me a new purpose. I became conscious of the needs of the person I guided.

I grew. I overcame my early apprehensions and hesitancy and made the adjustments necessary. It felt exciting.

I felt greeted by nature, it awakened and validated my many senses. Soon I felt a confidence in them.

I sensed minute changes in the ground's texture and contours and became aware of my inner nature's automatic reactions to them.

My inner child was excited, alert and happy, it felt necessary and fulfilled, it was having a ball.

By shutting off my language, reason and sight, I turned on a lot more of *Us*.

How can you use the wisdom of *Us* to connect with *Us?* In this activity, to learn nature's ways in a good way, participants *learn to trust their unmediated contacts with the natural world.* Too often wranglers mediate our experiences. We only learn to trust our interpretations, our "clockwise-counterclockwise" concepts and words, describing them. These can and have mislead us for too often they ignore our non-language ways of knowing and being. For example, whenever wranglers teach us to conceptualize a natural area as square feet of economically valuable real estate, we tend to know it as an expendable exploitable object, a commodity or resource which we develop, improve or otherwise treat accordingly. This is different than knowing a natural area as *Us,* a personal fulfillment, a friend, a wisdom, a community, a home and life support system of other species, our other body, a teacher, an additional mother, a biological necessity for one's ethical, physical and emotional well being, a celebration of 4 billion years of relating wisely, or a spiritual place. Without validating that *Us* possesses these qualities, we seldom bother to incorporate *Us* in our lives. Very few wranglers teach about the values of *Us.*

How does the wisdom of *Us* express itself in you? Since Aristotle, our wrangler's stories and beliefs have taught us that we know and learn from five senses: *touch, taste, smell, sight* and *sound.* But if we trust modern research and our experiences in natural areas we find that *we biologically inherit, and can know and learn from, not five, but over 53 senses and feelings of, by and from Us, the natural environment.* This usually surprises us. Why? Because *our extreme, wranglered, indoor lives often mediate out of sight and mind the existence and value of our many natural senses, our non-language being.* But don't believe me or the substantiating inquiries of physiologists behaviorists and other investigators. For you, what we report is just more wrangler mediation (55A, 27). With respect to 53 senses, ***trust your own unmediated sensations in natural areas.*** Haven't you sensed *Hunger? Thirst? Compassion? Place? Nurturing? Color? Community? Space? Sex? Language? Gravity? Form? Motion?* Including our "normal" five senses, this makes 18 different senses. And if this observation interests you, it indicates that your *sense of reason* is alive and challenged. There's a minimum of 34 more natural sense groups including: *Electromagnetism. Direction. Season. Hormonal. Distance. Self. Fatigue. Trust. Camouflaging. Consciousness. Esthetics. Belonging to a larger whole.* Each sense is an attraction, a different way of knowing, a different expression of aliveness, being and surviving.

I italicize each natural sense that I mention in this book to help readers remember that we naturally *feel/experience* natural senses. Too often we lose contact with our natural sensitivities and feelings because we been wrangled to know them only as names. We hide them under the labels of "needs" "drives" and "instincts". *However, no matter how we label or define them, we* ***feel*** *these senses.*

Normally the fulfillment of natural senses, *in some form,* organism to organism, interconnects the natural world as a community. The senses are the wisdom of *Us* connecting and communicating (communing). Collectively, they pervade and ecologically balance every natural being as well as Earth and its diversity of natural species, cultures and people. For this reason, ***enjoyably validating, trusting, and strengthening people's natural senses holds great potential for balance, education and unity.***

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does the natural world intercommunicate? How? *Write your response here:*

In order to be part of a system or community, any being must somehow, in some way, be in communication with that system. Otherwise, that being has no clue as to what the system is doing and vice versa, so it can't be part of it. It is well documented that Planet Earth is a global life system of which people are part. Therefore, it must communicate with us and vice versa. How? It communicates with us in the same way that it communicates with every other species, through attractions, through our natural senses and feelings including *reasoning* and *language*. It is important to recognize that although sensory communication is mostly non-verbal communication, it is communication.

2. Who invented senses and feelings? ( )Parents ( )The board of education ( )Thoreau ( )George Washington ( )Jesus ( )Mickey Mouse ( )none of the above.

Us, the natural world and its evolution, not humanity, "invented" natural senses. They pervade the natural world within and about us. They originate as the ancient desire *to be* branches and diversifies. They are an expressive part of the Law of *Us*. For example, an organism living in the sea has little need for sensing the equivalent of *thirst*. But, if an organism evolves as a land animal, a natural survival sense similar to *thirst* must simultaneously evolve *to connect the organism and water.* Without the sense (sic) to know it needs water, the organism dies.

As any life form physically separates from nature's essentials, (e-sense-ials) for survival, the Law of ***Us*** *encodes that life form's DNA with natural attraction sensitivities that keep it connected to those essentials,* We experience this network of attraction connections through our many sensory anatomical, neurophysiological and perceptual attributes[55A]. *Each natural sense signals something special about our relationship with* ***Us,*** *the natural world that exists in ourselves, each other, and the environment.* That signal, like *Us*, is always in the "now", the present moment, never the past or future.

The nervous system of Planet Earth and the universe consists of an immediate, growing, ever-branching network of differing connective attractions of, by and from the original desire *to be*, its source of being. Each different kind of sensory connection in the global network is as real and true as is any other aspect of the planet.

3. Do plants and animals have feelings?
Write your response here:

We don't know how plants, animals or minerals register natural senses, but we do know that *we feel them.* Like our circling hand motion being called *clockwise* or *counter-clockwise*, we label our natural feelings as many things: Attractions. Loves. Sensations. Affinities. Spirits. Resonances. Invitations. Callings. Intuitions. God(s). Yahweh. Communications. Affections. Blessings. Bonds. Higher Power. Natural wisdom. *Us.* No matter what we call or label them, ***our natural senses and feelings are facts.*** The are as real, true, and provable as are rocks, water, and rainbows; as pinching ourselves or circling our hand above our head without words. Consciously or sub-consciously they exist, until deadened. We are normally born with them intact and healthy[57]. They constantly seek the pleasure of *Us*, of fulfillment. They avoid the pain of being thwarted, disconnected or unexpressed. The

wisdom of *Us* is that fulfillment of each sense produces good satisfying feelings. Non-fulfillment produces desires for fulfillment, for sensory satisfaction,

Our natural senses and feelings are *Us* within us. They are our multiple personality, our array of selves, the true nature of our inner child. For us to responsibly enjoy life, each unadulterated natural sense requires our validation and trust. Each natural sense has value for each makes its special contribution to stability, survival and sanity. Especially notice that *consciousness, language* and *reason* are 3 natural senses. Their special value to humanity we will explore later. Modern psychology mainly consists of studying and dealing with the effects of using these 3 senses to excessively separate us from our many other senses and *Us*.

Is it reasonable for you to learn to trust the existence and callings of *Us*, your multi-sensory nature? Why?

The Multi-sensory Person

People may not feel all of nature, only that part which we've exercised or which supported our evolutionary survival in the natural world. For example, our sense of sight doesn't ordinarily register infrared or ultra-violet light, although other animals do. Biologically we may have evolved and survive without seeing these ranges. Similarly, cats survive seeing only blue and yellow, and many animals are color blind.

You can enjoy most of the 53 natural survival senses listed below. You can experience them as an essence (sic) of your desire *to be*, as attractive callings that connect nature within you to the natural environment, people's inner nature, and global life processes. Through them you can more fully know *Us* within and about you. The more you awaken and fulfill them, the more you sense satisfaction, balance and wisdom..

The list below contains general categories of senses. Each sense can be further subdivided into the over 120 senses felt by people who predict earthquakes or the 250 senses of those who have extra sensory perception. For example, I list *color* as single sense yet we sense many thousands of colors. Each different color represents a different sensitivity, each inherently signals a different mood or calling, each has different intensities that have different meanings, each has a different neurophysiology and genetics. We consider *taste* as one sense, but our ability to taste salt, sweet, bitter and sour are each physiologically, chemically and anatomically unique. Each sense has a different genetic blueprint in us arising from *Us*, the eons of biological experiences and relationships with the global life community that evolved it into its present state.[55A]

Most natural senses are present but unexercised in an infant. Even the sense of *reason* and *place* operate in 2-month old babies.[55B] Since we didn't invent natural senses, and can't know them solely through language, each natural sense mystifies us, but as Albert Einstein said "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science."

Between the years of 1961-1978, researcher Guy Murchie made an exhaustive study of the scientific inquiry about natural senses as it appeared in many hundreds of books and periodicals during those 17 years. In 1986 he told me that scientific methodology and research had actually identified over eighty different biological senses which pervade the natural world. He said that he verified this number through authorities at the Harvard Biological Laboratories. All these senses, he said, he clumped together as 31 senses for literary convenience in his book The Seven Mysteries of Life published by Houghton Mifflin in 1978. His painstaking efforts and bibliography deserve your applause and confidence.

Although Ames. Gesell, Pearce, Rivlin, Gravelle, Samuels, Sheppard, Sheldrake, Spelke, LePoncin, Wynn[55A] and scores of other researchers continuously validate our multi-sensory nature, the full significance of it has yet to be recognized. As discussed in Chapter10, natural senses remain hidden like individual letters or like you not seeing your nose at this moment. Why? Because, our culture's prejudicial indoor wranglering pollutes our minds.

Natural senses are the wisdom of *Us* in action, they attract us to the whole of natural world and its ways. But our society wrangles us to conquer *Us,* nature and the natural. As in any war, one seldom validates or praises the attributes of their enemy, rather, they are considered hazards. For example, we abhor ethnic cleansing and the Nazi holocaust, but we have yet to fully acknowledge no less heed and make amends for our annihilation of America's native peoples and habitats. Similarly, we learn to depreciate our natural senses. We exalt the senses that we can use to manipulate our other senses and the natural world, and we demean the remaining 45 natural senses which tell us about the rest of *Us* and its wisdom. Our demeaned, numbed natural senses are a vast missing part of a responsible story about *Us,* about how and when to act where. As Carl Jung noted, "Our feelings are not only reasonable, they are as discriminating, logical and consistent as abstract thinking."

Why is it important for you to learn to trust your natural senses? Paradoxically, like Amanda Brown, who could not recognize God's work on Earth, we desperately need *Us*'s ability to maintain peace in order for us to stop the war against *Us* within us. That war is the mother of most wars, pollution, dysfunction, disease, mental illness, apathy and violence. It abandons our sensory inner child, it disintegrates the passions that normally bring about balance and positive change.[50A]

I offer you the following list of senses with this important reminder: Each sense is an attraction that can awaken many parts of us and *Us* when we use it to connect with the natural world in the environment and people. *That touchy-feely, hands-on, connecting* ***experience,*** *not this knowledge, catalyzes personal growth, self esteem and balance.* This list only provides information. It feeds and guides our senses of *reason* and *language* which, without passion (apathy), are ineffective when it comes to behavior, growth and change. *Reason* and *language* are only 4% of our inherent means to know and bond to *Us.* 51 other sense groups help to complete the process.

To use this list effectively, we must enlist its information *in conjunction with* going to a natural area and exposing our indoor conditioning to the many natural senses awakened there. Doing so reasonably connects, rejuvenates, and deeply educates us. It lets *Us* teach. It extends us to safely reach into the natural world in order to more fully sense and make sense of our lives and all of life. As we will see in the following chapters, what we call our attractions are actually the these natural senses in action. Like silently waving your arm, they each feel good even though they have many names (See question 3. above).

The Radiation Senses

1. Sense of light and sight, including polarized light.
2. Sense of seeing without eyes such as heliotropism or the sun sense of plants.
3. Sense of color.
4. Sense of moods and identities attached to colors.
5. Sense of awareness of one's own visibility or invisibility and consequent camouflaging.
6. Sensitivity to radiation other than visible light including radio waves, X rays, etc.
7. Sense of Temperature and temperature change.
8. Sense of season including ability to insulate, hibernate and winter sleep.
9. Electromagnetic sense and polarity which includes the ability to generate current (as in the nervous system and brain waves) or other energies.

The Feeling Senses

10. Hearing including resonance, vibrations, sonar and ultrasonic frequencies.
11. Awareness of pressure, particularly underground, underwater, and to wind and air.
12. Sensitivity to gravity.

13. The sense of excretion for waste elimination and protection from enemies.
14. Feel, particularly touch on the skin.
15. Sense of weight, gravity and balance.
16. Space or proximity sense.
17. Coriolus sense or awareness of effects of the rotation of the Earth.
18. Body movement sensations and sense of mobility.

The Chemical Senses

19. Smell with and beyond the nose.
20. Taste with and beyond the tongue.
21. Appetite and hunger
22. Hunting, killing or food obtaining urges
23. Humidity sense including thirst, evaporation control and the acumen to find water or evade a flood.
24. Hormonal sense, as to pheromones and other chemical stimuli.

The Mental Senses

25. Pain, external, internal.
26. Mental or spiritual distress.
27. Sense of fear, dread of injury, death, or attack.
28. Procreative urges including sex awareness, courting, love, mating, paternity and raising young.
29. Sense of play, sport, humor, pleasure and laughter.
30. Sense of physical place, navigation senses including detailed awareness of land and seascapes, of the positions of the sun, moon and stars.
31. Sense of time.
32. Sense of electromagnetic fields.
33. Sense of weather changes.
34. Sense of emotional place, of community, belonging, support, trust and thankfulness.
35. Sense of self including friendship, companionship and power.
36. Domineering and territorial sense.
37. Colonizing sense including receptive awareness of one's fellow creatures, sometimes to the degree of being absorbed into a superorganism.
38. Horticultural sense and the ability to cultivate crops, as is done by ants that grow fungus, by fungus who farm algae, or birds that leave food to attract their prey.
39. Language and articulation sense, used to express feelings and convey information in every medium from the bees' dance to human literature.
40. Sense of humility, appreciation, ethics.
41. Senses of form and design.
42. Reasoning, including memory and the capacity for logic and science.
43. Sense of mind and consciousness.
44. Intuition or subconscious deduction.
45. Aesthetic sense, including creativity and appreciation of beauty, music, literature, form, design and drama.
46. Psychic capacity such as foreknowledge, clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychokinesis, astral projection and possibly certain animal instincts and plant sensitivities.
47. Sense of biological and astral time, awareness of past, present and future events.
48. The capacity to hypnotize other creatures.
49. Relaxation and sleep including dreaming, meditation, brain wave awareness.
50. Sense of pupation including cocoon building and metamorphosis.
51. Sense of excessive stress and capitulation.
52. Sense of survival by joining a more established organism.
53. Spiritual sense, including conscience, capacity for sublime love, ecstasy, a sense of sin, profound sorrow and sacrifice.

These senses and sensitivities are manifestations of *Us*, the wholeness of *Us* that exists in us and in the natural environment. This list explains how, sense by sense, *Us* connects with itself in us, through us and around us.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"If you don't live in your feelings, you don't live in the real world. Feelings are the truth."
- David Viscott.

Chapter 17
Sensory Connecting

The fall leaves shower from the sky, then float on the lake like a sailing fleet of many colors. Each leaf is its own blend of shapes, colors, textures and motions. Each is a special attraction and joy.

I've long forgotten my third grade teacher's name. However, I remember somebody during third grade named Badanes. In 1939, my third grade teacher wrangled us with the Badanes Method, a "New Math" technique. The experiment didn't work and our whole class had to re-learn math that summer or repeat third grade.

My parents chose to teach me "old math" in a small lakeside summer cottage we rented, rather than stay in New York City while I attended summer school. For two months, much against my will, while in the country, every morning, I did math problems out of a workbook. In the afternoons I played, fished, swam and hiked the hills, lakes and meadows. Unmistakably, I sensed the spectacular difference between how poorly I felt each morning doing math versus enjoying the richness of outdoor attractions during the afternoons and evenings. My mathematical mornings were a drag in comparison to sensing the wild beauty of rocks, trees and wind. It was like the difference between life and death. It's not that I didn't like math. The problem was that math mainly consisted of being wrangled into using senses of *reasoning* and *language* in a prescribed un-natural way. Enjoying math was dull in comparison to enjoying the multi-sensory wild and free nature of *Us*. *Us* ignited its joyful ways and spirit lying in me. *Us* said, "It is wise to love, to feel happy."

I spent much time during my remaining 18 years in academia daydreaming about the joys of *Us*. In retrospect, the summer's math course taught me more about the whole of life than it did about multiplication and division. I learned what was truly attractive from that summer's hands-on lesson. I discovered that I had to work diligently to know math, but I already knew nature's attractive expressions inherently. When I opened up my problems to the consensus of my senses, my feelings guided me safely through many hard times in the years that followed. The following activity makes your feelings available to do the same for you.

Go to a natural area and there visit a natural place or thing that attracts you. Then, attempt to identify (put into language) which of your natural senses were involved in this attraction. *Write your response here:*

Section B. Participants' Reactions:

The alcove was serene and cozy; I felt protected and *nurtured.*

I know I like water. I was heading for the stream when I recognized the rock's *color* attracted me so I surrendered to it.

I liked the ground's texture and contours, and they drew my attention to the giant oak

The *spirit* of the wind blown grass called me to it.

I was caught in the resonance to the cove's *coolness.*

I enjoyed the *sparkling mood* of that sunny open area.

The antics of the chipmunks were *humorous.*

The atmosphere enchanted me and I gained fulfillment by *breathing* deeply

I loved the fawn's innocence.

At first, the relaxing *motion* of the waves grabbed me.

I felt an affinity with the soft *shape* of the clouds.

I felt *hunger* so I ate the apple. I satisfied my *hunger.*

How do your natural senses help *Us* live in you? Participants validate that these sensory attractions are trustable and enjoyable. It feels good paying attention to them and fulfilling them. In time, their discoveries lead them to recognize that in nature, each natural attraction they feel means one of their natural senses has awakened. *Each is a part of* Us *within them connecting to itself in the natural environment and vice versa.* For example, we have the ability to sense and enjoy the color red because as humanity evolved in and through the natural world, redness contained some important aspects of survival; for instance, red is often the color of ripe fruit. Similarly, with taste, a fruit's degree of sweetness also discloses its degree of ripeness. The sweeter, the more ripe, the more digestible.

Considerations: This activity entices participants' *reasoning* and *language* senses to validate, appreciate and trust the immediate enjoyment from the natural world touching itself in them. The attractions and fulfillments that each sense finds in nature and human nature provide and are nature's unconditional love. Through it *Us* deeply touches Itself in us.

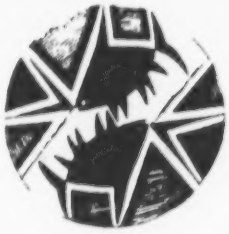
Many studies show that most environmentally active/caring people say they became so by spending time in natural areas, especially when they were young. Their enamoring enchantment outdoors enabled their *reason, language* and *consciousness* to sense, enjoy, validate, trust, appreciate and remember how good *Us* felt. Our troubles emanate from wranglering, subdividing, alienating or killing our natural love to be natural, to be immediate, to gain wholeness by awakening and trusting our non-language selves.

Participant's reaction:

> It reminded me of the bible: "He has made every thing beautiful in his time; also He has set the world in their heart. (Ecclesiastes 3:11)"

Participants' Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"Individuality is only possible if it unfolds from wholeness." - **David Bohm**



Chapter 18.
The Balance Of Nature

The unique location of this dancing trickle of water lets me taste it and at the same time see this stream being born high on the clouded, snow-laden hill. As I drink, I sense that the planet's life is flowing through me. I'm drinking the clouds, snow and mountain.

The propaganda from the war against *Us* wrangled my father. He never realized he was a war victim because nobody ever taught that the war existed, no less that he was trained to be one of the enemy. He made that discovery when, as a pre-med student, he graduated with honors at the head of his class but he couldn't find the money to attend medical school. The wranglers had addicted him to escaping injury and abandonment feelings by teaching him to play the role of an unassertive nice guy. He placidly accepted his lack of finances and spent most of his life and brilliance selling shoes. Meanwhile, many non-refugees, with non-Jewish names, and with connections in high places in the war office, never made the grade but made medicine a career.

Dad was such a good student that he knew full well the myth of the American dream. He learned, and taught me, that America had unlimited natural resources and opportunities, that the democratic, capitalist, Judeo-Christian ethic and morality uniquely conceived liberty and justice for all. From such teachings, he and I learned that if things went wrong in our lives, it was due to our carelessness, laziness, and stupidity, or our lack of luck, commitment, bravery or caring. No wonder I sometimes feel that way about myself, especially when stressed.

Liberty and Justice for all? It was not until I lived outdoors for years that I realized the flaw in our wranglered ways of thinking. When it said *for all,* it didn't mean *Us*. Instead, it mostly meant white, financially secure individuals. In practice, our way too often neglected to include the rest of *Us*: minorities, sexes, races, children and the non-human species. With rare exception, our ways flourished by exploiting them, by wrangling against them in the name of *progress*, *property rights* and *survival of the fittest*. The U.S. Constitution, not the Law of *Us*, was our way's supreme law of the land. Minorities, the poor and other species were thought to have little to offer and therefore were afforded little protection.

We will never discover our self worth if we believe we must learn to be worthwhile from the teachings of those who war against *Us*. We are *Us*. We are born wise and worthwhile. We must learn to avoid wranglers and teachings that fail to incorporate and support the wisdom of *Us*. We must embrace relationships that let us be all the goodness of *Us* that we inherently are. *Us* itself best teaches us about itself. This chapter, and the two following chapters, help *Us* teach you about it.

Take a drink of water —preferably from raindrops, melting snow or a safe spring—and relate how it feels to do so. *Write your impressions here:*

Section B. Participants' Reactions:

This was rewarding, thirst-quenching, rejuvenating.

It brings the environment into me.

Drinking pure water is drinking the real thing, it's God in action.

I felt physically connected to *Us* and the Planet.

I never thought about this before.

Water is part of the life force and *Us* flowing through me.

Maintaining and only drinking pure water is a way to surrender to *Us*.

Are you in charge of your sensations and feelings, or are they in charge of you? By tracing water's movement through clouds, streams, lakes and soil, participants become aware that people are part of Earth's flow of water.

As it does in all organisms, water from the environment flows into us, through us and out of us. What it contains, we contain and vice versa. But, during this process, neither an excess nor shortage of water enters or leaves us. We neither explode, bloat nor dehydrate. Obviously, a vital regulator(s) guides and balances water through us.

What attracts, and regulates water through us? Each of us is familiar with what does this but, like not seeing our nose, many of us can't identify it. *Write your response here:*

Most participants are surprised to discover that the water attractor and regulator they know best is *thirst*, a natural sense. Thirst is one of the many wisdoms of *Us*. By activating or deactivating, like a control valve, *thirst* regulates. *So does every other natural sense.* For example, *thirst* not only *motivates us to drink* the Planet's water, but *quenched thirst feelings* tell us *when to stop* drinking.

Over my decades in natural areas I became aware that each natural sense's presence and/or intensity is the wisdom of *Us* wisely governing *Us*. Each natural sense remembers and is part of nature's eons of life experience. Each is a different expression of the desire *to be. When we feel natural sensations, we actually sense the global life community nurturing and balancing its flow in and through us.*

Considerations: Each sense participates in the natural world's governance. However, our nature-alienating indoor upbringing excessively emphasizes our *reasoning* and *language* (3 Rs) senses. These senses may represent educational excellence, but they are only two of our 53 natural senses. They are part, but not all, of the wisdom, of *Us*. They are not our only, nor most wide-ranged, way of knowing. Unlike ourselves, the global life community neither idolizes, restricts itself to, nor depends upon *reasoning* and *language* alone. The consensus of *Us's* congress of senses prevents reasoning and language from wrangling the other senses.

Do your sensations and feelings belong to you alone? We feel natural senses biologically, but conceptually we're wrangled to disregard them. For this reason, it surprises us to learn that *thirst* is as much a property of water as is wetness. We and the living Earth cooperatively experience *thirst* for our mutual benefit. The sensation does not belong only to us, it also belongs to the natural world, to *Us*.

Food for thought. We inherit from nature a multi-sensory "velcro" that continually attracts, attaches and bonds us to the natural world. Our natural senses are why children are infatuated with nature. Children don't *learn* to love Bambi; they are *born* with the wisdom of *Us*, a love for nature's creatures. But when wranglers closet, demean and prevent us from exercising that love, it deteriorates. Thus, we seldom honor our ability to intensely love and raise our pets in the same way that we honor our ability to make money.

Not surprisingly, through brain wave studies, researchers find that each of our daily adult thoughts, statements and acts originate in our old-brain natural sense and feeling attractions. However, when our wrangled, habitual, languaged way of knowing mediates these signals, our natural connections often disappear from sight. In the cover-up process, our *reasoning* loses raw sensory data, the biological life experience of our natural selves, *our inner child*. That sensory data is the natural world's eons of experience, the wisdom of *Us*. It attempts to express itself, or its denial, in our dreams. Its loss in our daily lives is a key source of our troubles. Ordinarily, its inherent knowledge and memory of when to turn on or off peacefully, responsibly governs the global life community and our lives.

Can your natural senses heal you emotionally? Active natural senses heal us. Recent studies indicate that psychotherapy which takes place in natural areas is significantly more successful than the same therapy indoors. Many people recognize from personal experience that simply spending time in a natural area is noticeably therapeutic. These findings should not surprise us because natural areas are the origins of and a major part of *Us*.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves." **- John Muir**

Chapter 19
The Ecological Flow of *Us*

Even though my hand is wet, most of the pond water I just held scampered back to the land through my fingers.

At age 29, the sensations from my integrity as a left-hander, fire-maker and nature lover led me down a different path. I left my familiar surroundings, family, friends, educational training and occupation. My belief in them had led me to spend most of my working hours as an outdoor education executive confined to pushing a pencil in a windowless cellar office in downtown New York City. My body revolted; this was no longer acceptable. I chose and designed a new direction for myself *solely by validating, trusting and knowing what was attractive to me.* I knew I loved the spirit of living in beauty, person to person communal life outdoors, natural areas, camping, hiking, wildlife, cycling, skiing, canoeing, natural history, traditional music, guidance counseling, recreation, and deep worthwhile teaching. I'd always known that doing these things made me feel good. Why not design and center my professional and personal life around them, around myself, and thereby feel good? These things had immeasurable value. By offering them to others, I should be able to sustain myself feelingfully and economically.

It took eight challenging years to establish a program and business that met these goals. The essence of its success was to continue to validate my natural attractions, to walk my talk. That process catalyzed unity. It enabled *Us* to connect me and my program participants to *It* and thereby to each other. The results were positive on all levels, including, finally, economic ones. The following activity engages you in that process for no matter what natural attraction you choose to connect with, it further brings you to *Us*.

Go to a natural attraction that calls you, a blade of grass, a leaf, a rock, or any other natural object. Grasp it firmly and then gently move away from it, *but not far enough to dislodge it.* Stay in equilibrium with it for 20 seconds or more. *Write what you experienced during the 20 seconds:*

Section B. Participants' Reactions:

I felt I might hurt it.

I sensed the twig pulling back.

It wanted to stay put.

The grass was attracted and attached to other things.

In its own way the rock said it belonged there.

The ladybug signalled that it had its own desires.

I felt the flower drawing me into the planet.

It brought me into the moment.

The energy I used holding it connected me to the Planet.

It was non-verbal knowing. I enjoyed sensing and being *Us* in action.

When I regulated my pulling to be in equilibrium with the flower, I surrendered to *Us*.

How are you and all other things connected to each other and the flow of life? No matter what a participant selects to pull on, that thing is somehow attached to other things by attractions. That's how *Us* communicates and flourishes. It's like a global multi-sensory web. As mentioned previously, through natural attractions, on sub-cellular levels, every few years over 95% of our body is replaced molecule by molecule, by attractions to new molecules and atoms from our surroundings. Every seven years or so, the natural world completely replaces us. It becomes us, we become it (56 p.321). We might define death as a time when some attractions cease, the vital flow of *Us* into us stops, and we become the natural environment permanently. We are personally and collectively responsible for giving *Us* a supportive, enjoyable home in us. Without it, *Us* in us becomes more attracted to its home in *Us* of the environment, the global life community. *Us* indicates its discontent with us through signals like stress, dysfunctions and disorders, which led one pundit to remark, "Death is nature's way of telling us to slow down."

Long ago, ancient peoples recognized that we and the natural world are intimately connected. That's why the roots of the word *humanity* are related to *humus*, a fertile forest earth. Biologically, we and Humus live identically. A teaspoon of Humus is a community containing 5 million bacteria, 20 million fungi, 1 million protozoa, 200,000 algae and several miles of root hairs and fungus mycelium. Humus and Humans are *Us* and its wisdom in action.

Considerations: "Out of sight is out of mind." Life itself is a major component in keeping itself alive. We seldom recognize this fact because we rarely see life doing its miraculous thing. That's because life does much of its work microscopically. Eons ago, natural attractions enabled microorganisms to intelligently "invent" immensely complex, stabilizing, survival relationships including: Fermentation. Photosynthesis. Genetics. Immune systems. Respiration. Nitrogen fixation. Decomposition. Mineralization. The atmosphere. Personal and global balance. Each is the wisdom of *Us* in action. The 53 attractions/senses of *Us* that created and sustain these life relationships, are sensitivities that remain alive and well when exercised, treasured and celebrated.

Food for thought. We and *Us* are one. Today, microorganisms and their multiplicity of attractions continue to biologically run and balance the world and us. [50, 54, 55] We have ten times as many microorganisms living in our body as we do human cells. Over half our body weight is microorganisms, over 110 different species live on our skin alone. With respect to our sensory attraction to air (*suffocation* feelings), consider this: the descendents of bacteria that swam in primeval seas breathing oxygen 3 billion years ago, exist now in all plant and animal cells as independent microorganism colonies called *mitochondria*. Without mitochondria, neither plants nor animals can utilize oxygen and live. Mitochondria alone have the ability to metabolize oxygen and thereby make it available to the cell. They have their own DNA genes and an independent reproductive cycle within the human cells they inhabit. It's as if less adaptive life forms were attracted to evolve us and other species in order that they might have a more diverse life and better chance to survive. Our respiratory sense attracts us to feel, connect and ground to the mitochondria's contribution to our lives. In this light, our senses of *hunger*, *taste* and *smell* attract us to environmental necessities in order to feed the many microorganism species within us that help us digest our food. Within us, their food and digestive processes becomes ours. At what point does being ourselves stop and being microorganisms start?

By validating the pervasive unity that results from attraction forces, it becomes reasonable for us to trust that we and *Us* are one. Validating that atoms and their particles consist almost entirely of attraction forces (loves) validates someone's observation that "Love is the only reality of the world because it is all." The truth of the ages appears to be that the wisdom of *Us* is love. *Love* and *live* could be the same word. Lest this all seem simply an academic matter of semantics, recognize that the meanings we attach to words defines our existence. As Thomas Mann observed: "Speech is Civilization itself."

Participant's reactions:

This information shows how much sense natural senses can actually make.

This makes the spiritual oneness I feel with nature into a physical reality as well.

God is everywhere.

It's love that makes the world go round, little bugs too.

Yahoo!! Just tremendous! Thank you for the validation of nature and myself. I sense more, feel more alive. I'm part of the flow.

It helps me sense my death as my becoming closer and belonging to a greater whole.

We don't die, we join *Us* as other forms of life.

Love within each of us wants to live, to be felt.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"Nature is the unseen intelligence that loved us into being." - **Elbert Hubbard**

Chapter 20
Intrasensory Governance

I committed myself to using these nature-connecting activities daily. I was attracted to do so because I was slightly overweight, my previously injured back, knee and ankle hurt, my cholesterol and PSA blood tests were high and I felt down. Were these symptoms of excessive disconnection from Us? The answer came within 5 months: my pain was reduced, my blood tests were normal and I'd lost 15 pounds, too.

Over years of trial and error experiments, my unique outdoor education, community learned to govern every aspect of itself by encouraging each individual to express what was naturally attractive to them at any given moment. Because this included each person's attractions to the well being of the community itself, it was not a selfish process. Rather, the process was *Us* in action, an attraction in and of itself. We consented to be challenged to find what natural attractions or senses we had in common. This let us identify a *common sense*, an ongoing, ever changing common good for our community and each of its members. The process included using all our natural senses, including our sense of reason. We learned as much from this method of self-governance as we did from any other activity.

The reason the consensus process works so well is that it is precisely the same process by which *Us* operates, and from which *Us* got its name. It is how *Us* created us. It enabled each of us to connect and commune with *Us* in ourselves, each other, and in the natural environment as well. As the following activity demonstrates, the 53 natural senses communicate and modify each other in order to create the enjoyable integrity of Planet Earth and our inner child.

Imagine that you go out to eat in a expensive, renowned restaurant. The menu is beautifully designed and everybody's food looks appetizing, smells and tastes great. To your surprise, the waitress brings out your order and your scrambled eggs are dark brown, the ham sky blue and the potatoes bright green. Will you eat them? How do they make you feel? *Write your response here:*

Section B. Participants' reactions:

I couldn't eat them.

It would depend upon how hungry I was.

If I decided to eat them, I'd have to shut my eyes.

First I'd have to investigate what, how and why the food was so strangely colored. Even if it made perfect sense, I think I'd feel queasy.

Maybe I'd eat them if somebody paid me enough.

They'd give me bad vibes.

Only if I knew it was safe.

I'd see it as being a joke and I might go along with it.

Do your natural senses tell each other how to behave? This activity demonstrates intersensory communication in action; each sense touches influences and modifies many senses. The natural senses "talk" to each other and thereby make common sense with each other. This is part of their history and nature. Although all senses are naturally attracted to support eating, the unusual food colors, although attractive in themselves, are out of synchronization with the past survival experiences of *Us*. This signals something is wrong. That signal influences the other senses and eating becomes uncomfortable, if not impossible. In this way, the wholeness of *Us*, in a forgiving, non-punishing way, removes the shortcomings of any isolated part of *Us*.

The unusual food colors turn off the natural sensory experiences of *place, community, trust, belonging, reason, intuition* and others. This influences *appetite, touch, taste* and *smell*. It reduces or nullifies them, although the "wrong" colors might appeal to senses of *fun, humor* and *logic*. Another example: Our thirst is affected by heat, (temperature), salt content (chemical), *fatigue*, and *sight, sound, taste* or even thought (*language, reason, consciousness*) of water. Our thirst is influenced by *Us*, a *congress of senses*. The congress of senses doesn't just forgive the "mistakes" of any one sense, it actually welcomes their contribution to making sense. *Us* is big enough to do this.

In concert, the natural senses form a trustable *consensus*, a *common sense* that helps life survive. Every diversity offers knowledge that further informs and stabilizes the whole.

Participants' reactions:

What a great way to define common sense, to see it is real, natural and useful.

Sensory consensus lets *Us* deal with the defects and shortcomings of any of its relationships.

It makes me want to go with the flow.

Forgiveness is a function of common sense.

Maybe that's why its called consens*Us*.

Considerations: Researchers have established how *Us* physiologically operates in us. For example, the intersensory communion in the colored food exercise takes place as thousands of cones and rods in the eye transform the food's color and shape into a group of electrical signals known as a nerve impulse. Simultaneously, the ears nose and skin etc. take in other data and transform it into electrical signals. Electrical signals from emotional responses (moods, pleasure, disapproval etc.) enjoin these signals and these many senses form a composite electrical message which is electrically and chemically transmitted to the brain along nerve cells and their connectors.

As shown by radioisotope CAT scans, in the brain, like a steel ball in a pinball machine, the signal travels between the mind's many perceptual regions, including those of *language* and *reason*. Each region compares the signal to everything we have previously sensed. At phenomenal speed, electrical impulses and chemical substances bounce back and forth between these neuron interconnected regions of the brain. They exchange signals, as well as store and retrieve them. A neurotransmitter then transports the modified signal out of the brain and back to its origins where it triggers appropriate behaviors. [53]

Food for thought: The immensely accelerated neural process of our body-mind is a hologram of the process by which, over the eons, Earth's life community slowly and steadily communicates. Earth's neurons are the global flow of air, water, electric, magnetic, geologic, gravitational and other attraction forces. We embody that process because each of our personal senses is a biological continuum of the global life community's properties and processes.

Nature's multi-sensory intelligence heals its and our scrapes and stresses, it keeps us in balance. However, we and the global community differ in that our upbringing wrangles us to trust and communicate through language stories. Our social and environmental degradation show that we desperately need holistic spiritual stories, stories which re-connect us with *Us,* the global congress and spirit of senses within and without.

As does every other sense, our *language* and *reasoning* senses also color what we know. Ask yourself: would you have eaten the breakfast if the colors were OK but the ham was labeled grasshopper meat, the eggs were labeled fecal matter, and the potatoes had a skull and cross bones on them? Think about the effects of the labels "clockwise and counter clockwise".

Unholistic labels value and bias our perceptions, thinking and behavior. For our health and happiness, we must critically evaluate them by their long term effects. A label can separate us from, or connect us to, *Us.*

To better recognize the immense power of labels and language, try this: Place two identical teaspoons in front of you. Now, hold your hands out in front of you, close your eyes and imagine that your left hand is holding a rope from which hangs an immense, heavy rock. Your job is to try to keep the rock in the air, off the ground. Meanwhile, your right hand holds a rope attached to a large helium balloon which pulls your hand skyward. Your job is to hold it down. Remain, with your eyes closed, struggling with the imaginary ropes for one minute.

Open your eyes and pick up one teaspoon in each hand. Do they feel like they are of equal weight? Any discrepancy you note results from wrangling by the "rock" and "helium balloon" language messages the above paragraph contains. The messages polluted your ability to perceive the reality of the teaspoons being of equal weight. They also probably wrangled you to move your outstretched hands up or down while your eyes were closed. *Write your reaction here:*

Participants' Reactions:

My inner nature is deeply influenced by the language messages I believe.

My inner child reacts to every sense equally. I need to use many senses to achieve balance.

No wonder violent movies scare me. The dark room cuts off many senses and the little child within me loses touch with reality. *Us* within me thinks it's really in danger.

If I'm not in touch with the whole of life, I can hurt *Us* within and around me.

I'm addicted to language and indoor reasoning.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"The feeling for the infinite ...can be attained only if we are bounded to the utmost." **- Carl Jung**

Chapter 21
Sustaining Equilibrium

That evening I lay on the ground on my back. I imagined myself to be an attached Siamese twin of Planet Earth. Lying there, I felt changes in Earth and myself. The motions of the sun, and stars and the fluctuating tensions of light, winds, dew, sounds, motions and temperature attracted me. I recognized Earth's heartbeat: night-day, night-day, night-day. I felt the tensions and relaxations of its beat touch my heart. We were Siamese twins and our heart was one.

Designing my life around the callings of my natural attractions was easier said than done. It was too radical to support, and it met with resistance on many fronts. In 1959, establishing a co-ed camping, environmental, outdoor education, travel/study program was like invading a threatened nation which fought back. It led to law suits, bankruptcy threats, divorce, intrigue, risk, deceit and hard feelings. At times, my inner child felt like it was Adolph Hitler.

My inner nature was not designed to cope with the kind of tensions it had to deal with in the business world. They were unnatural threats from the war machine against *Us* which I had set out to escape and/or change. I ended up with an ulcer and several permanent physical injuries, but, in the end succeeded in establishing a significant program. Through it all, my attractions and commitment to *Us* intensified, for as I lived in nature, my senses pulsated to a friendlier, more forgiving tension-relaxation rhythm. This chapter awakens it in you.

Read the paragraph in italics that follows the chapter title, then do the "breath-holding activity," as follows:

1. Acknowledge that at this moment, as you breathe, you feel comfortable because you are connected to and in balance with the atmosphere.
2. Separate from the atmosphere by exhaling and holding your breath.
3. Almost immediately, an inborn felt respiratory sense will detect the separation. You will begin to feel the tensions of suffocation.
4. Acknowledge that suffocation feelings attract you to air, not to water, food or entertainment. Suffocation tells you to breathe the atmosphere.
5. Re-connect with the atmosphere by breathing. As tension relaxes, note that you regain the comfort of equilibrium.

Write your reactions to this activity here:

Section B. Participants' reactions:

My natural tensions and relaxations are Earth's way of letting me know my connection to it

Tension-relaxation signals me how to reshape my relationships so that they harmonize with *Us*.

The life pulse of Earth is the heart of every living thing on Earth.

Tension-relaxation underlies my tastes, fantasies and sensations. I am immersed in tension-relaxation.

Us and tension-relaxation feelings are immediate, they only exist in the present.

How does *Us* empower your inner child to resonate with *It*? The wisdom of *Us* sustains Planet Earth. Every natural attraction we experience is a tension (attention) which signals us to resonate with *Us/Earth's* global life community. A human infant, our inner child, is the Planet personified; it embodies the Planet's attractions, life processes and materials. Its natural tension-relaxation attractions exist to acquaint and connect the infant with the natural world's life-supporting elements and pulse. For example:

The infant senses the tension of suffocation to attract the Planet's air. Breathing relaxes this tension and satisfies the Planet's tension for carbon dioxide.

The infant senses the attraction called thirst because Earth has rain, lakes and rivers to give it water. Thirst attracts the Planet's water and, in turn, the infant's urine relaxes the living planet's tensions for liquid, nitrogen and flow.

The infant senses hunger because the global life community wants it to eat and live. The infant senses the attractive tension to excrete because Mother Earth needs its by-products as food for other organisms.

The infant desires mobility to move toward attractive environments that support it and need it.

The infant feels loneliness because it craves the life-supportive niche and relationships that Earth and people's inner nature provide. The infant satisfies the living planet's desire to enter stabilizing relationships.

The infant senses temperature because it seeks environments that best support its life and vice-versa.

The infant experiences tensions of sexual desire and nurturing as part of nature's love for it and its kind.

The infant senses music, form and color so that it may react to those aspects of Earth. The infant satisfies the living planet's desire to have life supportive relationships.

The infant feels tensions and senses because, in concert, senses catalyze global and personal balance. The infant trusts the now moment because only in it does the whole of life resonate.

The infant loves life because love is the nature of *Us*.

Considerations: Our infant self remains alive in us throughout our lives as our inner child. It is entirely sentient. Our mind is mainly designed to pay attention to attractions in the natural world for they are its origin and sustenance. The infant within us craves them, for it is of them.

Food for thought: Over the eons, our minds evolved to register a wide range of sensory experiences and emotions, not just abstract symbols and logical thoughts like "clockwise-counterclockwise". To be fully rational, our rationality must honor our natural senses and act accordingly. When it doesn't, the infant within us senses abandonment for it is being disconnected from *Us*, the sources of its life. Our comfort-discomfort feelings at any given moment entirely depend upon wisdom about what combinations of logic, symbol-images, attractions and tensions touch our inner child.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." - **William Shakespeare**

Chapter 22
Nature Negatives

The prick of the thistle spine quickly brings to mind how attracted I am to other more comfortable and welcoming plants.

Marty applied to our expedition school program as a last resort. He had dropped out of school and was into drugs and alcohol. We only accepted him in the program because he'd had it with life as he knew it. He convinced us that he wanted to change, to commit himself to living responsibly and to co-creating a living and learning community that would help him do so.

Marty confronted the school group with many problems. Each of them became part of our curriculum for we could see their significance and relationship to ourselves. He was seldom likable or trustable, often being surly, inexpressive, and remote. We had to draw out how he felt at our meetings in order to make consensus group decisions that included him. He participated in forming negative cliques that let him act out the anger he felt from his emotional abandonment by his well established parents.

Marty liked to cook, hike, and write. He received massive encouragement from the group to fulfill these attractions and share his skills in them with other group members. To achieve this goal, he needed and asked for support. He discovered new self-fulfillments while getting it. Support was not available unless he helped to create an open and honest group atmosphere where he could safely and constructively express himself. He became attracted to sharing his thoughts and feelings with others, so that they could, in turn, support them.

Through this process, we got to know Marty on a deeper, more natural level. In response, he developed a genuine interest in building relationships based on helping the inner child in others fulfill their attractions. His new found friends would, in turn, support, share and thereby enhance his enjoyment and growth in his strong areas of interest.

From these interactions, Marty developed new interests. The program enhanced this process by having the group evaluate themselves, as well as each individual's skill development in every aspect of educating themselves and each other. Our many varied activities became the academic subjects we took as a real-life practicum, our evaluations translated into grades for the courses and were entered on accredited transcripts.

Marty flourished in this atmosphere. His moment by moment sensory fulfillment and commitment to living sensibly made taboo his desire for drugs and alcohol. It replaced it with a desire to live in rewarding places and gain fulfillment by sustaining open and honest relationships. He became skilled in these self-chosen quests; they became a life commitment for him.

By the end of the year Marty seemed like a different person. The experience had nurtured many wrangled, hurt, withdrawn natural parts of him and as he found support for his attractions, he related more successfully. Only when he felt overwhelmed did his negative tendencies reappear, but soon he'd fearlessly, competently deal with them by sharing his concerns with others, discovering his attractions, and gaining new sensory fulfillment safely.

The energies of Marty's former negativity and hurt became fuel for his connecting with *Us*. The following activity can help you achieve that goal. Try it with the nature negatives you sense in people as well as in natural areas.

1. Go to a natural area and sense the physical discomforts found there such as thorns, rough surfaces, mosquitoes, cold water, harsh weather, strangers etc. *Write your reactions to them here:*

2. In your imagination, identify the discomforts you sense from a negative person or persons. *Write your reactions to them here:*

Section B. Participants' reactions:

1. I don't like being hungry or thirsty.

   I rubbed the boulder's rough surface and it scraped me.

   I hate mosquitoes, their buzzing annoys me.

   If we are part of *Us* and vice versa, why is *Us* giving itself poison ivy?

   I learned to enjoy nature negatives because they made me feel more alive.

   I was afraid I'd see a snake.

2. Harry always disagrees with me.

   Joan has a short fuse and gets angry easily

   Mother constantly wrangles me meet to her expectations.

   My father would abuse me when he was drunk.

Are your nature negative sensations and feelings real or imagined? The remainder of this activity deals with your negative feelings about nature, people and yourself. It helps you recognize that *whenever you sense discomfort of any kind,* ***the natural world is supporting you.*** Discomfort (*suffocation,* for example) is the natural world trying to keep you alive (connect you with air) because it treasures your life. Discomfort signals that *something is out of balance, some sense is experiencing excessive separation from the natural world, from* Us. Each discomfort says: "For survival, seek and follow the attraction that now calls you. Gain fulfillment, attain stability again." You discover that the natural world doesn't irritate us, *our unfulfilled natural senses do*. This discovery helps you remove defects and shortcomings wrongly assigned to the natural world including the inner child, the natural world within us.

Re-examine the nature negatives you sensed in the activity above when visiting a natural area. Which of your natural attractions do they signal are not being fulfilled? *Write your responses here:*

Repeat the above exercise for the negatives you experience in people.

Section B. Participants' reactions:

> My thirst actually says, "Follow your attractions to water," or "Water is calling you." Suffocation does the same thing with respect to air.
>
> The discomforts from cold, wet weather signal, "Satisfy your attractions to warmer, drier places, enjoyably fulfill these callings."
>
> The rough surface communicated that I should respect it and protect myself from it. When I did, I gained the satisfaction of knowing I was in charge of my own comfort.
>
> The mosquitoes buzz told me to go somewhere else or protect myself if I don't want to be stung. I appreciated the signal.
>
> How different this positive way of knowing nature is. It stops me from demeaning or fearing the natural environment as a cold, harsh dangerous place that I must continuously conquer for comfort and survival.
>
> This activity makes me believe that every plant and animal lives where it has the least tension and the most support. Otherwise, it achieves this equilibrium by joining some other form of life. No wonder there's no garbage in nature. Everything is alive, everything belongs, everything is attractive.
>
> It made me ask "Where does this tree stop and the soil start?"
>
> I can see how negative people frustrate my natural attractions to them. They have positive points too.
>
> The way to relate to nature, within or without, is to only relate through attractions.

What is the effect of having your natural senses injured, numbed or killed? Our discomforts often symptomize that our inner child is remembering its abandonment. Because we have lost our multisensory supportive relationships with the global life community, we have little to fall back on when encountering the tensions from nature's guiding ways. Without an alternative backup, we interpret our discomforts as threats, as negatives, rather than as supportive directional signals for survival.

By respecting our desire *to be*, we discover that: Our discomfort from loneliness is really an attraction for responsible sensory relationships. Depression is an attraction for stronger sensory satisfaction. Abandonment is a strong attraction to being connected to *Us*, our life support community.

Normally, other senses come into play when we sense discomfort. For example, fulfilling senses of *community, place, compassion, nurturing, space, consciousness, reason, belonging to a greater whole, self, esthetics* and many others ordinarily prevent our attractions from becoming destructive, excessive or runaway. But, when these balancing senses have been wrangled dysfunctional or unavailable, excessiveness runs rampant (57). We feel we need our indoor world and dependencies even more. That's why the Law of *Us* says: "Seek, trust and heed not just one, but every natural sense that attracts you. In concert, they create wholeness" A participant's reaction:

> Because I'm very allergic to bee stings, I'm extremely afraid of bees. But my natural attraction to the flower's smell, color and form was so great that for many minutes I was fascinated watching and hearing a bee not 8 inches away from my nose. There was no fear. That's a big breakthrough for me.

Food for thought. A world built on attractions has no experience in dealing with negatives, which explains why

negative human behavior is so difficult to curtail. Usually one negative anything can adversely affect hundreds of positives, yet the reverse is seldom true.

With respect to negatives and recovery, Michael Mahaffey who spiritually recovered from cancer, says "Our bodies are God's genius, living planets in themselves. When our closeted lives excessively stress our bodies, our inner being and ecology finds itself out of balance. It ingeniously gives symptoms of its disorder by attacking itself with negatives, disease and dysfunction. It moves to gain death, and thereby again join and enjoy God's universal order."

People have argued that negatives do exist in nature. They attempt to prove their point by showing that even though "unlike poles" of a magnet attract each other, the "alike" poles of magnets repel each other. Repelling, they claim, is a negative. What they fail to realize is that *people "wrangle" the magnet's natural relationships and push the like poles together in order to demonstrate that they repel.* In their natural state, magnetic substances exist in attraction relationships with each other. If, perchance, like poles do come in contact with each other, what we term as "negative repelling" is actually a force to realign the magnets so that their natural attractions once again unite them. This principal holds true throughout the global life community. As the Law of *Us* states: the universal *desire to be* of *Us* stabilizes itself and grows through natural attractions.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"There is one common flow, one common breathing, all things are in sympathy." **- Hippocrates**

Chapter 23
Your Life Community

We were enthusiastic about visiting an Indian shell mound deep in the Everglades. We carefully approached encounters with alligators and poisonous snakes, spiders and plants. By respecting these species wishes to be undisturbed by us, we followed attractive paths that avoided them, safely achieved our goal and returned to camp.

Over 95% of new businesses cater to the public's mainstream whims and fail, yet against even greater odds, my alternative outdoor education program survived. It flourished only because it was not just a business. It was my love, a total attractive way of life that made sense for me and for its participants. Fueled and guided by enthusiastic spirits and caring, after seven years its economics finally supported it.

My new way of life for myself offered young people and adults sensible fulfillment of their natural senses. It created an embrace of us by *Us* and vice versa. Not surprisingly, that embrace ignites fires of self-esteem, restoration, stress management and responsibility. To be held in this embrace, participants learned some wisdom of *Us*. They learned to relate by expressing their attractions openly and honestly on all levels. They found the process itself to be attractive, rewarding and lasting. It helped them turn the tide against the war that closeted, exploited and demeaned their inner child and *Us*.

Twenty years later, many colleges accredited my trailside learning process as a graduate and undergraduate environmental education degree program. It was apparent to evaluators that as the process connected nature within to nature without, it let *Us* catalyze a new ecologically sound consciousness in people of any age. As one evaluator put it, "Mike, you are on the side of the angels."

Every moment, *Us* gives me life. It's like each day is Christmas. I am attracted to giving *Us* a gift in return. My gift to *Us* is to support its desire *to be*. The following activity lets you sense the attractive contribution of *Us* within us to *Us* around us.

Go to a place that attracts you, one where you can look in one direction and only see a natural scene. The bigger the view, the better, but even a plant or rock will do. Just get close enough to it so that you can see almost nothing else but it.

Take a deep breath. Recognize that as you breathe, Planet Earth breathes you. Exhale. What you exhale and/or excrete is food and habitat for the global life community. To help yourself feelingfully register this:

1. For 30 seconds, cup your hands over your eyes so that you can't see out.

2. Now, breathe normally. Each time you exhale open up the space between your hands just a crack so that you can see out just a little bit more. Sense that as you exhale you feed and support the natural world, you make its life possible and therefore it grows in size and glory. By your tenth breath, your hands should be fully opened so that you can see the full natural scene before you.

3. Validate and trust what you thought and felt as you breathed life into the global community. *Write what you thought and felt here:*

Section B. Participants' reactions:

My life was exhaling beauty and grandeur into the environment.

I felt powerful and necessary for I was sustaining the world.

The planet seemed dependent on my life and breath.

I sensed that the opposite of what I was seeing was also taking place, the planet sustained my life with every breath.

It occurred to me that since the planet and I exchanged breaths, we must both be alive.

It made me sense the planet as being my other body.

I felt like a god who had great spiritual powers to sustain life.

It gave me a good feeling about going to the bathroom in the woods.

Doing this brought to mind the thought in Ecclestiastes: "As beasts die, so die people; they have all one breath; so that a man has no preeminence above a beast (3:19)."

I remembered that the words *air, spirit* and *psyche* were all related. That makes *inspiration, respiration, psychology* and *expiration* spiritual experiences as well as scientific ones. In fact, *conspire* means to breathe together; *Us* and I are a conspiracy to live. I love it!

What story can you trust that will give you lasting, wholesome support? Each of the other 52 natural senses also acts as an attractive connector. When alive and well, each natural sense in its own way helps breathe life into Earth and ourselves. How does it feel to realize that you have a beautiful living planet as an ally that feelingfully supports you in 53 different ways when you ask it to do so?

My years in Nature have shown me that *Us*, the natural world's desire *to be* has the genius to organize, preserve and regenerate itself. Obviously, *Us* best knows how to maintain itself. That is its wisdom

As a language-directed person who loves *Us*, I am attracted to giving *Us* gifts. One gift is to create a story in our common language that connects people to the wisdom of *Us*. The story must offset the wranglers that goad us into joining the war against *Us*. The story-gift I have created is simple: *Do activities that help you awaken and trust your natural attractions to the congress of natural senses.*

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

Section Four

THE DISCONNECTORS

Confronting the Process of Estrangement

"Planet Earth is all that we have in common. It is impossible to damage, exploit or care for each other more or differently than we do Earth." **- Wendall Berry**

Chapter 24
Alienation

I'm sleeping indoors again. The stuffy dead air makes me long for the damp fragrance of the woods, hooting owls and the embracing lullaby of a breeze.

One of my students complained, "Whenever I mention to my family or friends that our upbringing teaches us to wage war against *Us*, they get annoyed with me. What can I do?" Eight weeks later, I risked responding to her question. It was the last week of school. We had now camped-out, lived and learned together across the U.S.A. for over 200 days and nights. We had created the most peaceful and supportive living situation we had ever known. We were very close and nobody really wanted to leave.

During that last week, while visiting the spectacular Great Sand Dunes of Colorado, I suggested that we play "Capture the Flag." It is an exciting physical game with warlike qualities such as acting like wranglers and physically capturing people, freeing prisoners, invading other's, territories, being deceptive and stealing the enemy's flag in order to win. I said it could be a fun learning experience. After some discussion, we all consented to play and we divided ourselves into two competing teams.

Within an hour, some people were at each other's throats about how harshly others played, how they cheated, being too aggressive, making it more than a game, making winning more important than being careful or compassionate with others, getting out of control, losing sight of the rights of others, intentionally aggravating, misleading and manipulating people, treating people as game objects rather than respecting them as human beings.

By consenting to play Capture the Flag, we placed ourselves in competitive, aggressive postures that were conceived by, and mimicked the wrangler-driven aspects of our lives at home, school, work and play. In an hour's time, the game's atmosphere began to disintegrate us. By consensus, we stopped the game and discussed what had happened.

The game's competitiveness triggered an outpouring of hurtful memories from our wranglered home life. We became aware of how vulnerable we were to concepts and rules that divided us and placed us in warlike postures with each other and the natural world. If it could happen to us here, it could and did happen to anybody. In a normal childhood and lifetime, it could and did wreak havoc.

We decided that if we were to avoid the dangers and destructive effects of conquest, whenever possible it was best to change or avoid participating in situations or institutions that encouraged it. To learn how to do that was the purpose of our school. We noted, with regret, that although we had learned something useful by playing the game, its competitive spirit had disconnected us from the beauty and peace of the silent sand dunes, the spectacular Colorado Rockies that surrounded us, and the goodness in each other that we had so carefully cultured during the year. Although the game helped us see a source of our problems, it took us time to recover from it.

I felt relieved when, on the last day of school, the group decided that what learned from playing Capture the Flag was worthwhile. They said that if they had their choice, next year they'd repeat that educational adventure. The following activity offers you that lesson.

> Visit a natural area that attracts you and, once there, place a thick mitten on one of your hands, or wrap a towel around one of them. Now blow on your hands, kiss them, pinch them, sprinkle them with soil and water. Touch the dew on a wildflower, softly stroke plants, animals and rocks, wave your hands in the air. *Write what you experience here:*

Section B. Participants' reactions:

The covered hand was warmer and more protected, but it seldom felt the outside world.

It sensed things differently than did the bare hand, it was comparatively numb.

The mittened hand saddened me, but thinking about what having to wear the mitten meant in terms of my protected, indoor childhood frustrated me. I got angry.

Nothing is anybody's fault. Our society's stories threaten our inner child when they tell us to wear the mitten or be abandoned.

The damn mitten is a lie that we're forced to learn.

The thicker the mitten, the less I could sense.

Why don't you usually pay attention to callings from *Us?* This activity helps us see how sensory numbness results from a person living in a mitten or closet. We often don't pay attention to the natural world's callings, or to our natural senses, because our extreme indoor lives seldom contact or exercise them. The natural world is "the environment", "outside" or "nature." It is not us, nor *Us*, rather, it is for us to conquer. For example, almost never does the guide in the blind nature walk (chapter 15) have the participant to whom they are introducing nature, touch or look at the guide's face, yet the guide is nature too. Predictably, our problems result from our mentality's wranglered separation from *Us*, our mentality's attractive, supportive, origins wisdom and life.

How did the war against *Us* and your inner child get started?
Natural Cultures: Our alienation from the natural world results from humanity leaving the tropics. Biologically and culturally, humanity originally evolved there. In many ways the tropics, being consistently warm with abundant food, resemble the womb of our human mother as well as the Garden of Eden. Our senses and ancient cultural stories evolved to attract and adapt us to tropical conditions.

During the ice ages, as Planet Earth changed, tropical conditions changed. People(s) migrated. Humanity's *desire to be* had to deal with *being* in more unstable temperate and seasonal conditions. During this transition period, most peoples' cultural stories remained intact with respect to relating to the natural world. They incorporated the successful experiences of their natural senses in contact with the new environmental conditions they encountered.

The sense of *reason* helped make reasonable changes. *Reason* validated the adoptive process by evaluating behavior and its effects. *Reason* invented and reinforced fire-making ,agriculture, and other artificially stabile tropical conditions. *Reason* also signalled that it made perfect sense survivalwise to continually heighten sensory

awareness of the ways of the changing natural environment. The biological sense of *belonging to a larger whole* remained reasonable. It was reasonable to listen to, respect, depend upon and revere the Great Spirit, *the universal desire to be,* the underlying source of the many natural senses and landscapes. It was reasonable to believe that the *universal desire to be* could be found and respected in every natural object and force; *each contained and therefore was a spirit.* People lived in and with *Us,* their natural home of natural spirits that we today might call The Great Natural Cathedral of Mother Earth The Divine. In it, all things were seen as family members or saints. Its wisdom of *Us* , over time, physically adapted people to their new natural environments,

Western Culture: Today, a short-sighted, wrangling, nature-conquering story dominates our Western sense of *consciousness.* Our story developed from our cultural ancestors encountering situations that challenged their tropical-survival makeup. As climate changed they discovered that by combining their new-brain senses of *language*, *reason* and *consciousness,* they could conceive and create artificial, *tropic-simulating,* womblike "closets". These consisted of agricultural and indoor pockets, free and divided from the natural world's tension and relaxation fluctuations. Our cultural ancestors became *conscious* that through their *language-reasoning-consciousness* creativity, they could survive in any place they could build tropiclike closets, no matter the natural environmental conditions. They became *Tropicmakers.* Their *consciousness* became conscious of *reason, language* and *itself* as major survival factors. Together, these three senses could promote their society's survival by wrangling, subdividing and dominating the whole of nature, within and without.

In our tropicmaking consciousness, our wrangler's story emphasized:

> *For survival, people must respect, strengthen and obey tropicmaking reasoning and language. These two senses are most attractive for they, not the natural world, are our means to survival. Trust them and the useful labels, stories and artifacts they create. Trust and revere their creativity. The natural world has abandoned us survivalwise. It fluctuates, it is unstable. It is best used as a resource for making our womblike tropiclike artificial indoor world.*

What influence has tropicmaking had on your personal life? As people sensed that *reason* and *language* were most attractive for survival, these two senses became trained, reinforced and empowered. Like bullies in a playground, *reason* and *language* senses dominated *consciousness.* They wrangled, usurped and enslaved peoples' many senses and multi-sensual *consciousness* which normally was globally connected, aware and caring. Survival by sensing the whole of life was wrangled into survival by *tropicmaking reasoning* and *language* abstractly remembering the tropical environment and comparatively, judgmentally labeling, subdividing and manipulating the whole of life, including *consciousness* and most other natural senses. Indoor life so overshadowed outdoor exposure, that people's biology was never stressed enough to trigger it to make physiological adaptations to new natural environments.

Today, our misleading cultural story still says: *"Create artificial tropics, become tropicmakers; survive by conquering and dominating nature in order to build protective tropic-like closets. Subdivide and wrangle the wholeness and wisdom of Us."*

The tropicmaking story appears reasonable. It conveys that *it* is survival. Historically, it has worked. Our senses of *reason* and *language* have registered and internalized it in *consciousness.* It is a programmed habit.

Within us, armed with the tropicmaking survival imperative, *reason* and *language* conquer, usurp and enslave most of our other natural senses. They wrangle and inhibit multi-sensory *consciousness* which normally conveys globally connected, awareness and caring. *Our survival by sensing the whole of life has become survival by* ***tropicmaking reasoning and language.*** These two culturally biased senses label, subdivide manipulate and conquer the whole of life, including our inner child. This is similar to "clockwise" and "counter-clockwise" disregarding 14 billion years of natural attraction relationships or Amanda Brown not recognizing God.

Considerations: The natural world within and about us has become grist for our tropicmaking mills. Our natural senses are destroyed, injured or bonded to tropicmaking's abstracts and disconnecting activities. Our inner child senses painful abandonment as it is disconnected from its natural home in the natural environment. Our inner child only senses support from wranglers when it encourages or engages in tropicmaking activities and reasoning.

Food for thought. For our cultural ancestors and us, the natural world, including most natural senses, became a resource. We take for granted that *Us* is a gift for us to ingeniously conquer and exploit.

Through the tropicmaking process, we've lost contact with our consensus-governing, self-regulatory senses. Rewarded by economics, approval and status, our nature-separated thinking is excessive and runaway. That's why today, as mentioned before, we are wrangled to spend 18,000 childhood hours closeted indoors at school, strengthening "the 3 Rs" in order for us to become thoughtful, literate respected citizens with diplomas. As our problems increase, many believe even more such closeted hours are needed; student's should attend school in the summertime too. But, our indoor learning is not balanced with multi-sensory outdoor education. Unlike more balanced societies, we learn to disown our natural senses. We find them and nature rude and uncivilized. We seldom seek, enjoy, appreciate, validate or trust our feelings like we do our money. A participant's reaction:

> After the workshop I realized that the human growth and development research and stages described by investigators like Erickson, Piaget and Maslow, describe, and pertain to, people in our problem-riddled tropicmaking culture. They're probably invalid in more natural societies. They tend to validate our management of the natural world rather than our spiritual attraction to it.

How do most tropicmakers experience God? As our society's ancestor's closeted themselves, they also closeted their perceptions of reality, including the nature of God. They took their male and female God(s) out of the wilderness, conceived them as a Man, and closeted Him in a relatively sterile heaven, far removed from Earth. Society endowed to Him the natural connectiveness, sensitivities and wisdom of the natural world that people lost due to excessive indoor living. God, living far away in heaven, could bless tropicmaking activities *no matter where they took place.* The result is today's paradigm gap which separates scientific logic from spirituality, church from state, 8 senses from the remaining 45 and people's *consciousness* from *Us* in the environment, each other and themselves. Tropicmaking's "Indoor living is survival" paradigm endows us with our culturally-biased, God given right and freedom to conquer the natural world and those close to it.

Participants' reactions:

> Our tropicmaking tainted *language, reasoning* and stories only provide limited knowledge about wholeness. They wrangle the wholeness of *Us*, of our many sensory ways of knowing.
>
> Our nature-conquering knowledge separates me from *Us.*
>
> Tropicmaking thinking eliminates us from Yahweh's Garden of Eden.
>
> If what we call "knowledge" is limited to senses of tropicmaking *language* and *reasoning,* then no wonder God did not want us to eat from the tree of knowledge. Yahweh's Garden of Eden itself was wisdom. It physically and emotionally manifested *Us.*
>
> Each culture creates differing images of God that fit their cultural story.
>
> We make God in our tropicmaking imagery. Our God blesses our indoor world, while natural culture's know God as Nature itself.

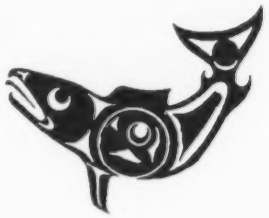
In hindsight, had my childhood programmed me to the religious and spiritual dogmas of the closet world, I would, like most people, never have left the closet. Paradoxically, I would have lost the profound relationships I enjoy with nature, the very experiences that people seek and call visionary, mystic or spiritual. I, however, experience these relationships as scientific, reasonable and holistic for I validate that natural senses and feelings are facts and attractions as well as spiritual callings. As such, they are as valid, true and acceptable to me as are the Capital Building and St. Patrick's Cathedral.

How does Tropicmaking effect you and The Law of *Us* : The Law of *Us* states that the original desire *to be* energizes the attractions that sustain and grow life as we know it. Seeking stability, life diversifies. As it does, it separates the desire *to be* into being in 53 different ways and senses. Enter the tropicmaking story: "We must conquer the natural world." That story acts like a meat grinder. It wrangles us to separate from and subdivide 14 billion years of evolving life-giving attractions, emotional marriages that exist within and about us. As the parts of Earth and ourselves become good, bad, right or wrong for living in our closet, the universal wholeness and integrity of *Us* becomes hamburger. So do we. It hurts.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"The cost of a thing is the amount of life which is required to be exchanged for it."
- Henry David Thoreau

Chapter 25
Prejudice Against Nature



They wanted a view of the water, so they cut the trees. They wanted money, so they cut the trees. They wanted a balance of trade, and wood for homes, cigar boxes and cigarette paper so they cut the trees. They wanted watersheds, topsoil, fish populations, forests, clear streams, peace and morality, so they cut the cutting.

In 1976, our outdoor school community visited the Mary Leaky archaeological site in California. There, the archaeologist showed us how people 50,000 years ago used hard rocks as hammers to chip out and shape softer rocks into points and axes. For three hours, we practiced using rocks this way and gained proficiency at the skill. Then we traveled to Death Valley, arriving in the teeth of a dust storm. We set up our tents, but the hard, compact ground prevented us from driving in the tent stakes.

Coughing, with eyes tearing from the dust, most students waited in line to use the only geology hammer we had in order to bang in their tent stakes. While waiting, they said we should buy more hammers for emergencies like this. Yet rocks lay all around which could have served as hammers, and only five hours before, we had used rocks as hammers.

We discussed the strange turn of events that night. Some of us felt shame and guilt for being wrong or stupid, until we chalked up our inappropriate thinking to our wrangled separation from nature. Without knowing it, our conditioned separation from nature had taught us a prejudice *against* rocks and *for* factory made hammers.

Three weeks later we had a similar hard-ground tenting situation arise. This time most, but not all of us, used rocks as tent stake hammers. Our outdoor education experiences had taught us to disarm our prejudice against nature and become more nature-compatible. This chapter helps you do the same.

1. Think about all the dirty (sic) words that you know. What are these words relationship to nature?

2. How do you feel about a nation wanting to own another nation's major city and committing hostile and immoral acts of violence to conquer and capture it?

Write your thoughts and feelings here:

Section B. Participants' Reactions:

1. I'd never thought about it before.

   Most filthy words we use describe natural acts.

   We view some of Nature's survival ways as being obnoxious.

   This seems far worse than calling Black people "niggers."

   Without being aware of it we are wrangled to believe that nature is bad, hostile, dirty, bestial and uncivilized.

   Nature is non-verbal, it can't explain its worthwhileness to us with words.

   Our natural senses are nature within us, we view and treat some of our inner child's attractions atrociously.

   Our civilized behavior seems uncivilized. What is civilization?

2. The natural world is a beautiful cooperative community, why is it OK to conquer it?

   I listed the ways: Without guilt, we daily bomb, bulldoze, annihilate, maim, poison, capture, cut, rape, exploit, domesticate and destroy natural communities and their people.

   I don't like to think about myself in this way.

   We're anti-nature bigots. We crusade against nature.

   We pacify our sense of reason by camouflaging our immoral anti-nature acts. We call our conquest of nature "survival," "economic growth," "development" "progress" and "jobs".

   This gets me disgusted with myself and our society.

Are you prejudiced with respect to getting rid or your prejudice against nature? It is never enjoyable to discover that you are prejudiced. The discovery implies that you are emotional and unreasonable...you know...like a woman or child allegedly is. This triggers fears of rejection by our biased civilization. The fears hook abandonment feelings. For this reason, although "The truth shall make you free," at times it hurts until our fears are allayed.

Some cultures love, honor and obey the natural world. Ours suffers from doing the opposite. Our culture, within and about us, is deeply prejudiced against nature. It's time to admit it and seek forgiveness. We decry the atrocities of others, but forget that we founded the U.S.A. by living out the slogan "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." Many aspects of that bias still exist today.

Marcus Aurelius said *"Our life is what our thoughts make it."* In our language-directed tropicmaking society, our words and concepts are our destiny. Helpfully or destructively they bring the past and future into the present. For example, the word *right* comes from "a straight line," something virtually unknown in nature; *being right* really means "being unnatural;" *being wrong* comes from being "curved and crooked," i.e. like the natural world. To be "right," our nature-prejudiced cultural story disowned the many different natural properties of *Us*.

Satan is the biblical explanation for our personal problems. How does he look? What is the relationship of his qualities to nature. *Write your reactions here:*

Participants' Reactions:

Satan is mean and evil.

He has fur, horns, and claws.

He lives in the wilderness; he's seldom a white person.

Satan has scales, forked hoofs and a tail. He's nature.

We attribute many of nature's characteristics to Satan.

"The Devil made me do it." Satan is a wrangler.

We portray the nature of Genesis as Satan, no wonder we separate ourselves from *Us.*

How can we like ourselves if we're taught that our inner nature is Satan?

It's not surprising that we have environmental problems.

When I realize all of the nature-negativity that we assign to Satan, I'm surprised he isn't portrayed as a woman or child.

Considerations: Tropicmaking prejudice and wranglers negate our natural senses like they negate other nature-connected beings such as species, indigenous cultures, people of color, women, children and caring sensitive men. Natural senses are not materials so they are immaterial; they are not matter so they don't matter. How badly we feel about our destructive exploits has little validity at environmental impact hearings. Only what we can quantify and qualify (*reasoning-language*) is what counts. Our history of raping natural environments and their people(s), including ourselves, once led to a student to tell her school principal *"You can't teach me what I want to know because what I want to know is how not to be like you"*.

Do you hold a prejudice against your inner nature? A civil war torments our inner child. As reason and language continually conquer the natural world, they remind our inner child that it has and is natural senses. It is a natural being and is therefore the enemy; unlovable, worthless, and bad; *what our inner child feels is often considered to be wrong.* For example, being an unnaturally dominant, aggressive and competitive wrangler is more rewarded than being sensitive, nurturing and compassionate; sensing a strong work ethic is more rewarded than sensing a strong land ethic; being negative often gets you more attention than being cooperative.

As society induces *reason* and *language* to conquer our natural senses, our inner child becomes garbage. It reacts to its abandonment with anger, hurt, anxiety, guilt, depression, defensiveness, shyness, blind obedience, self abuse, sadism, suicide, masochism or shame for being nature. It experiences the same abandonment, desperation and grief as do most natural peoples when conquered by dominant cultures. To compensate for and subdue its hurt, our inner child demands contact, love and attention unilaterally and abusively. Accordingly it is shamed, rejected or punished.

Why do you have to make a commitment in order to enjoy *Us*? The internal war between our inner child's closet-bonded senses and free natural senses cripples our inner child's ability to enjoy and validate all its attractions (loves). It makes obtaining love and personal happiness a task we have to consciously, responsibly commit to, protect and work for. It's like paying for free air. Seldom are we urged to get our hugs from the natural world, or are we given academic credit or money for doing so.
The *rights, wrongs, shoulds* and *musts* of our tropicmaking story too often assault, abuse and emotionally bankrupt our inner child. We unconsciously believe that nature and our inner child are wrong, the straight-lined indoor closet that we build is a should and a must, because it is right. We not only become victims of this destructive process, we actually learn to blame ourselves for it for by believing we are born as bad guys and sinners. We have obviously inherited the responsibility for dealing with our problems, but we didn't cause them. Our misguided cultural "conquer nature" story did. Until we get that understood, our guilt and shame cripple our ability to be responsible. We rarely offset this dilemma with equal time for sensitive outdoor counseling or education, for that, too, is taboo.

Does prejudice against nature affect your reasoning? As the quoted writers in these chapters and elsewhere show, knowledge of The Law of *Us* has been around a long time. But our closeted, prejudiced *reason* and *language* wranglers ignore it. They assign some demeaning label to it: spirituality, nostalgia, childishness, female thinking, emotional response, soft fuzzy thinking, subjective, and then shrug it off.

Tropicmaking contaminated *reason* and *language* hate the Law of *Us* view of pre-history and personal development. This view threatens these two senses' bonded attractions to our conquering indoor survival ways. The indoor world supports and empowers these ways, while the Law of *Us* says "You two senses are each only 1/53 of the picture".

Food for thought. Our adult *consciousness* is too often a warped, sense-brutalizing, post-hypnotic trance from our nature-alienated upbringing. By trusting our misleading cultural story, we govern our daily lives by giving our *conscious*ness at most only 20% of the sense(s) it needs in order for us to live the wise responsible life of *Us*. We abandon many vital aspects of nature within and without, including the inner child of our children (57). Invoking the Law of *Us* challenges this habitual stupidity because as previously stated, "People don't even begin to think until confronted by a problem" (John Dewey). A participant's reaction:

> Our cultural upbringing subdivides our mentality into "right brain" and "left brain" ways of relating. But we, and everything else, are obviously born to function whole-brained.

We can't depend upon our institutions, sciences or biased common sense to accurately evaluate or solve our problems. Their truths mainly hold true indoors. A more valid way to evaluate our cultural story is to critically observe its long term effects on ourselves, each other and the global life community's attractiveness and ability to be. Our runaway violence, pollution, extinctions, stress and disintegration of the natural world along with our abused, dysfunctional selves, tell the real story. They say our cultural stories, and therefore we, contain defects and shortcomings that we should admit and change. The heightened intensity of these problems in inner-city settings further confirms this. Their intensity there no doubt results from the inner city's greater separation from the natural environment.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"I said in my heart concerning the sons of men, that God might help them see that they themselves are beasts, what befalls them, befalls beasts." - **Ecclesiastes 3:19**

Chapter 26
Nature Abandoned

Life in all its magnificence was right there. I was bathing in it. Yet, like magic, obeying the two simple little words, "Don't breathe," separated me from it.

My mother was raised as an American refugee. Her unfamiliarity with American customs was offset by her close refugee community ties. They nurtured the tribal spirit with which each of us are born. Through Eleanor Roosevelt's settlement house movement, Mother found supportive relationships. She finally devoted herself to an extended family summer camp setting. The beautiful, rustic, children's camp was owned by old settlement house friends. She and our family flourished as staff members of the camp's community.

Out of the blue, the strange theft of an outboard motor triggered misdirected hostility between families. It deteriorated the camp relationship overnight. Mother was devastated. She lost and never recovered the self-expression that this warm supportive setting held for her. She never found another community to which she could comfortably fully commit herself. Society's normally cold, remote and isolated ways offered her little support or joy. Being impersonal was the antithesis of Mother's persona.

In 1953, our family reflected modern society's family disintegration. I was in the army, my brother was away at college, Dad commuted to work daily and Mother's childhood family was scattered. She became depressed from her community spirit's drastic abandonment and died of cancer at an early age. To the end, she stuck to the integrity of her loving natural ways. She died the tragic death of a war hero, a casualty on the losing side.

Consider the dysfunctions and deaths of people you know or have heard about. Do you think that they result from those individual's inner child's separation from *Us?* Review Chapter 14 and apply it to daily life situations:

How do dependencies on artificial ways make inroads on your happiness? Suffocation feelings and/or other stress help us remember our extreme nature-separated upbringing. They remind us about why children cry. But unlike re-connecting our sensations of *suffocation* to Earth's atmosphere, we usually don't re-connect our natural senses to the natural world. Instead, we let natural senses die, remain frustrated, or gain satisfactions from connecting to our artificial ways. We wrangle and bond our inner nature to the ways and means of "civilization," to our society's indoor thinking, laws and technologies. They, however, fail to offer our inner child the natural world's grandeur, familiarity, wise self-organization, globally networked relationships, inherent self-regulation, regenerative powers and eons of life experience. They lack the wisdom and joys of *Us.* As one participant put it, *"We're programmed to give up nature, the kingdom of God, so that we can gain satisfaction from watching television, especially commercials."*

How can you evaluate if abandonment from *Us* initiates your problems? By adulthood, we have usually gained the skills necessary for survival in society. Daily, our life experiences confirm that, with luck, we will survive somehow. There's even welfare as a last resort. In this light, adult abandonment fears (death) are

obviously fantasies. Yet, the many survival realities of our indoor lives seldom eliminate our abandonment fears. This suggests that it is our subconscious abandonment *by and from the natural world that frightens us.* We intuitively don't trust a society in which almost 70% of all medical disorders are stress related, where weekly, 35% of the population takes medication for stress-related symptoms. It is the antithesis of *Us* when 1% of the population owns 90% of the wealth needed for survival, when greed annihilates love, when 90% of a city population suffers neurotic disorders. Our inner child senses that in such an environment, it too, is an endangered species.

How do separation and abandonment feelings catalyze your problems? Our stressed, frustrated and injured natural senses demand satisfactions, no matter the cost. They gain and depend upon satisfactions from alcohol and drugs; money, natural resources and hurtful people; sex, power and fashions. Each dependency arises from our attempts to feel more joy, more fully alive. We crave sensation crutches and trauma tranquilizers to replace lost natural sensation and feeling fulfillment. Some substances bring joy by subduing our severance pain.

Deprived of our natural attraction fulfillments, we want. When we want, there is never enough. The plague of greed results. Too often, dependencies on harmful relationships become more urgent than avoiding their destructive effects. Show me people with problems, and I'll show you people with injured natural senses. Show me people with lingering diseases and I'll show you people with excessively stressed natural immune systems.

Food for Thought. Each injured natural sense is a nature-abandonment dysfunction that shapes our personality. Until the injured sense re-connects with nature and heals, or other senses compensate for it, the fear of abandonment motivates us to act disruptively. For example, as previously noted, natural people(s) normally are fulfilled by the satisfaction of their natural senses of *community, place, compassion, nurturing, space, consciousness, reason, belonging to a greater whole, self, esthetics, motion* and many others. Their fulfillment removes the need for them to get compensatory fulfillment from other senses. Accordingly, no one sense becomes destructively excessive and runaway. Use *hunger* as an example. *Hunger* is naturally satisfied by eating sufficient food. But when our other senses are hurt or dysfunctional from abandonment, we *hunger* for pacification, fulfillment and worthwhileness. Our *hunger* becomes insatiable, resulting in eating disorders. It becomes a wrangler. We literally eat the love and fulfillment we would normally receive from our injured natural senses. Many other dependencies result from this same process.

Like zombies, we are wranglered to mainly know the world through four senses: *sight, sound, reason* and *language*. History shows that we can't successfully live by these four senses alone. Our polluted, violent, exploitive juggernaut is senseless. It is nonsense because it's disconnected from the natural world's wise, guiding congress of senses. It is insane because it is emotionally unbalanced. Restated, the core of our problems is that *we destructively tranquilize our hurt from our war against the natural world within and about us, in order that we can continue to be paid and honored heroes in that war.* Our society's undeclared war against *Us* is the underlying mother of wars, violence and stress.

If you recognize your problems exist, why can't you change your ways? Our problems tenaciously resist change because they are not simply matters of poor choice. They are matters of bonded harmful relationships and the continuing influence of wranglers. Information alone proves ineffective once bonding occurs. Information mainly reaches our *language* and *reasoning* and they're often only part of the problem. Our sensory bonding to harmful pacifiers and band-aids is the rest of the problem. Bonding to *Us* remedies our problems because an individual being denied the wisdom of *Us* is what's caused them.

Behavioral change involves insecurity and risk. As we un-bond from the familiar, we risk triggering abandonment memories and feelings. For this reason, responsible change entails re-education. To be effective, it must loosen our closet-education bonds and deal with abandonment feelings. But most education and counseling take place indoors. This does not help participants bond to fresh air, sunshine, mountains, flowers, other species, our friend's inner child and wilderness values. *Our nature-separated inner child craves these connections to its biological roots.* That's why truly connecting with *Us* catalyzes joy and sustains caring, active people.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chap[illegible].

Section Five

EMPOWERING *US*

Outdoor Activities
That Reinforce Our Sense of Self

"If you do not listen to your own being you will have betrayed yourself." - **Rollo May**

Chapter 27
Strengthening Natural Senses

It was one thing to read the instruction book on how to operate an automobile; it was something else to actually drive one. It took months of repetition to make the new knowledge and physical coordination necessary for driving to become familiar and comfortable. After I finally did it, I read the instruction manual again. It almost seemed irrelevant. My repeated hands-on practice with a supportive instructor made me a competent driver; the written instructions alone did not and could not do this.

I discover and enjoy experiences with *Us* because I learned how to do so. Our misguided society, institutions and leaders never taught this to me, so I was seldom misguided in this respect. For me to make sense of my life, it makes sense not to learn about God and spirituality from people and organizations whose effects have long proven to be irresponsible.

I discovered *Us* in and around me because my parents gave me the choice to do so. "Choose your God and religion when you're mature and you have a mind of your own," they said. They came by that decision the hard way, for their religious upbringing had resulted in their persecution. They cared more about my well being than they did about wrangling me into religious dogma, so they chose not to expose me to the fate of their Jewish grandparents.

I did, however, respect the religion of my birth, because I revered the unconditional love and affection my grandfather gave me. He religiously practiced the old ways. He was a powerful giant, a quiet, gentle, henpecked tailor from the old country who personified, not preached, the teachings of Torah. I found that same love in my parents and their settlement house community friends. That love was not dogma, it just was. I found it everywhere in the universal desire *to be* (See Chapter 12).

Without having somebody place "clockwise" or "counterclockwise" religious labels on the relationships I revered, I learned to place my own words and labels on them. My labels matched and supported my inner child's non-verbal callings and experiences. They were not the war-torn preachings of others.

Creating my own labels allowed me to verbally reinforce attractions that I actually felt. Many of them were attractions to the natural world. Personalized labels let me more fully enjoy the oneness of nature within and about me. But I had no specific guide or method to follow, so it took me 54 years to explain the nature of *Us* to myself. It won't take you that long. The following 8 activities empower you with the process immediately. They enable *Us* to embrace itself in you and instantly bring Its presence into your life.

The wisdom of *Us* says, "It is wise to include my callings in order to gain true wisdom." The following activities help anyone achieve that goal. I and others find that they are like a prayer and/or meditation that improves our conscious contact with *Us* . They give us the skills to strengthen our separated and subdued natural senses. The activities enable our strong, but closet-bonded senses of *reasoning, language* and *consciousness* to seek, heed and honor the multi-sensory powers of the natural world within and without. They catalyze a useful spiritual awakening and satisfaction which eliminates the need for destructive fulfillment.

Participants can bring these 8 activities to mind collectively by remembering the acronym SEVMRATC

(pronounced sev-mer-rat-see). SEVMRATC is to **S**ense-**E**njoy-**V**alidate-**M**atch-**R**esonate-**A**ppreciate-**T**rust and **C**elebrate *Us*. It urges and empowers some of the our best cultural qualities to validate our natural attractions. This brings natural senses into our awareness. (Portions of SEVMRATC are adopted from the environmental ethics workshops of Dr. Clifford Knapp.) [52]

SEVMRATC: **S**ense-**E**njoy-**V**alidate/-**M**atch-**R**esonate-**A**ppreciate-**T**rust-**C**elebrate in a natural area that attracts you to it.

Instructions: **S**ense, **E**njoy, and **V**alidate may be done in sequence as a single visit in a natural area. **M**atch, **R**esonate, **A**ppreciate, **T**rust and **C**elebrate work best as separated individual visits spaced at least a day apart.

Activities for the first day:

Sense: Go to a natural place(s) that attracts you at this moment. For 15 seconds or more, make your mind blank, erase you dependencies on language, reasoning, and thinking. Do this in order to make space for yourself to simply feel this place's or thing's attractiveness. Just sense it.

Enjoy: Activate your *reasoning*, *language* and *consciousness* senses. Ask them to recognize and acknowledge that sensing this natural attraction is enjoyable; it feels good.

Validate: Acknowledge that:

- you are a person who finds this natural place or thing attractive and enjoys it.

- connecting with and through natural attractions catalyzes good feelings. Chapter 21.

- you deserve to have good feelings because they indicate ongoing survival. Chapter 18.

- good feelings arise from the survival process, from the natural environment touching your inner child and flowing through you. Chapter 16. 17.

- natural attractions awaken the part of your inner child *which is them in you.* Chapter 8.

- your sensations and feelings in this natural area are facts as real as any other facts. Chapter 11.

- the natural world produces at least 53 different attractive energies which connect with your inner child in order that you may continue *to be*. Seeing a bird in flight may awaken senses of *motion, freedom, awe, distance, place,* and *beauty*. The *color* orange might awaken memories of other survival experiences like dawn, autumn leaves, fire, or orange juice.

- Apply to this natural attraction the processes you ordinarily use to establish that something is a fact. For example: is this attraction an experience, repeatable, universal, culturally acceptable, validated by others, quantifiable, qualifiable, real, true, believable, logical, trustable, universal, proven, can you can feel it? (See Chapter 7). *Write your reactions here:*

Activities for the following 5 days: For each activity, go to a natural area that attracts you.

Match: Match this or some other natural attraction here. Physically assume its shape and/or motion. *For example:* To match the radiating shape of a leaf, posture yourself with your body and arms spread like the leaf and wave as it does in the wind. Note what you sense while doing this..Try to remember if or when you have felt this sensation(s) before, indoors or outdoors. For example, when you once sat in a rocking chair, climbed a tree on a windy day, or stood on a swing. Ask yourself: When you last experienced this sensation in the past, was the feeling considered to be an expression of the natural world? If not, under what label, concept or interpretation was it placed? "Clockwise?" "Counter-clockwise?" (see Chapter 8)

Engage your sense of language in matching your inner nature with the natural world. In writing, respond to the following: My favorite plant, animal, mineral or sensation while doing this activity is (1). I like it because it (2) _____(Complete this sentence fully, state why you like it).

Now place the phrase *I like myself because* in front of (2) the "because it" clause you just wrote. You can identify part of your inner nature by doing this. Does the changed sentence *I like myself because (2)* describe an aspect of your inner child or yourself? Does reading the sentence make you feel more comfortable or uncomfortable? If the latter, be sure to read Chapter 27 entitled *Fulfillment*.

Resonate: The attraction in this place has a certain quality to it which gives you a special feeling. Connect with this attraction through your other senses. For example, connect through your sense of *music*. Experimentally hum or sing a few musical notes until you find one which you feel resonates with (best represents or registers) this attraction. Once you make this connection, you have learned to know the attraction more fully by resonating with it through your sense of *music*.

Repeat the above resonating experience by selecting other senses by which you want to sense this attraction. Through them, you can more fully resonate with it at will and thereby strengthen it. For example: You can be attracted to the sound of a flowing stream and attempt to resonate with that sound through the senses of *community, taste, trust, smell, compassion* and *belonging*, etc.

Each time we resonate with a natural attraction through a different sense, we get to know the attraction and ourselves in a new, more fulfilling and holistic way. This holds true for the natural attractions we sense in people as well as in places.

A methodical way to better know yourself and nature is to go through the list of senses on pages *62 -63* one at a time, locate a natural attraction for each sense, and then resonate with that sense through each of the other 52 listed senses.

Appreciate: By calling to you and touching you, this natural attraction has given you good feelings. In a sentence, thank it for having given your life attractive enjoyable sensations. Honor this entity with a physical act, gift, or spoken words. Honor it for sharing its attractiveness with you as well as for sustaining the flow of the global life community through you. Honor it for filling your natural wants so that you don't excessively want.

Trust: Do a reality check. Determine if you really trust SEVMRATC. Demand that your *reasoning* and *language* senses learn to trust the attractions, senses and feelings that you obtained from this SEVMRATC experience. It is reasonable for you to expect your *reason* and *language* to trust them because your natural sensations and feelings are trustable facts of life. If this doesn't ring true, pinch yourself and return to chapter 11. Your sense and feelings are as real as sunshine, water, air and soil because they are part of them. Ask yourself whether you trust the love of Nature you may discover through these activities. Do you trust using SEVMRATC to connect with any natural area or sense? If not, try to identify why you feel connecting with nature is not trustable. Write a short statement explaining why you might want to trust and continue to use SEVMRATC or parts of it, and what you might do to learn to establish this trust.

Celebrate: In your notebook write a Haiku verse or short poem which expresses your thoughts and feelings about connecting with this attraction. (A Haiku is three line prose whose first line contains 5 syllables, second line contains 7 syllables and third closing line contains 5 syllables.) It helps *language* connect with and strengthen your senses and vice versa. For example, for connecting with orange autumn leaves you might write:

Orange sunrise leaves,
Awaken deep within me,
The dawn of being.

Upon completing the Haiku, assume a posture and/or dance motion which you feel states your good feelings with regard to this SEVMRATC event. Hold your position/motions for at least 30 seconds. If necessary, defend yourself from criticism coming from within or around you. Your habitual closeted thinking may demean you for participating in this celebration. It may label you as "touchy-feely" "childish" "unscientific" "fuzzy thinking" "far out" or "spiritual." Declare your independence. Protect your pursuit of happiness, your good feeling connections with *Us*, if you want them to flourish, satisfy and fulfill you. Nobody else can do this for you. Do your dance.

Share your Haikus. They enable language to connect people with Nature. Use them as an opening or closing to letters to friends. Decorate, frame and display them. That's why God invented refrigerator doors.

Many participants have found it helpful to complete the SEVMRATC sequence by doing the activities in **Fulfillment** (see chapter 28). Before proceeding,read the instructions for doing Section B found on page 6.

Section B. Participants' reactions:

SEVMRATC gave me a "high" that's spiritual, healthy and constructive.

I felt my sense of self intensify and deepen as I did these reinforcers.

I've sensed much of this in my life, but I was never able to put it into words or validate it.

This was definitely spiritual for me. It made me feel like I was embracing God and vice-versa.

SEVMRATC enabled me to own parts of myself that I've too long denied.

The Law of Us became real to me. I could sense within me the many variations of the "desire to be" that arise from diversity.

What a satisfying, fulfilling way to know or interpret nature!

Each activity made my inner child smile.

For me, resonating with nature awakened a new compassion for people and Planet Earth.

I already was strongly connected to nature so some activities interrupted my enjoyment of this area.

I've found that these activities help people who are disconnected to become more connected.

This is holistic environmental education at its best.

I definitely bonded to this area.

Each attraction is a love, and I know that the more ways that I love something, the stronger my love and ability to love becomes.

I've encouraged my students to use some of these activities and it has increased their writing abilities.

The resonating and fulfillment activities pulled this whole workshop together for me.

How can you reinforce and intensify *Us* in you? Strong, passionate bonds to the natural world within and without are the wisdom of *Us*. They responsibly catalyze contact with *Us* . We can't directly teach bonding or passion because it can't directly be taught. It's a holistic relationship process, a feeling, a God thing. We can however, have our *reasoning-language* senses learn to use activities that make space for *Us* to bond us to It in the environment and in each other.

Therapeutically, holistically SEVMRATC helps train our culturally empowered *reasoning* and *language* senses to seek, sense, enjoy and heed each of our many other inherent senses. It lets us know nature as nature knows itself. In time, wholeness fulfillment and stress management prevail. Our many formally abandoned natural attractions, including *compassion, community, place, nurturing, belonging, humility, appreciation, pleasure, spirituality* and *trust*, awaken, grow and express themselves. Once again we own and share them. They motivate us to change permanently. They improve our lives as they steal the energy fueling our greedy, destructive desires, dependencies and acts. Nature's harmony prevails, our inner child rejoices and the attractive desire *to be* on Earth flourishes. The power of *Us* to make this happen lies in each of us as well as in the environment.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

Natural Attraction Reactionaire and Self Evaluator

NOTE: Photocopy many copies of this form and complete pages 0-22 and 97-100 in this bookbefore using the form) The questions and activities in this training manual help you discover new thoughts, feelings and natural attraction sensations from *Us*. Whenever they occur, do the activities on pages 97-99 to strengthen and reinforce them and your relationship with *Us*. Then complete this form to make them more available to you at other times. Use the reverse side of this form if you need more space to write you reactions.

1. ( )Well Mind, Well Earth (WMWE) or ( )Connecting With Nature (CWN) activity page or number___ Time:_____ Date_____ Weather_____ ( )Solo ( )Partner (Partner's Name)___ _____

2. When I started I felt -10_____0_____+10. Describe the feeling:_____
uncomfortable neutral comfortable

_____

3. _____attracted me. I felt:
natural sensation, concept, thing, area, idea

4. I Sensed and Enjoyed *Us* as follows:(WMWE p. 97)

5. My Validation of this relationship between myself and*Us* is:

6. I ( ) could ( )could not resonate my hum with this attraction. (WMWE p. 98 Resonate paragraph 1) Optional resonators I usedwere: (Page 98 Resonate paragraph 2, 3)

7. My Matching (WMWE p. 98) memories and associations are: (continue on reverse side)

8. In my matching, this attraction was labeled or identified as:

9. My internalized wranglers involved are memories and feelings from:

10. My thoughts and feelings about this connection are:

11. I like _____ because: (Matching WMWE p. 98 paragraphs 2, 3)
this attraction

12. Reading #11 above as "I like myself because" feels:

13 I appreciated this natural attractions by (see Appreciate, page 98)

14. I celebrated this natural attraction by (see page 99 paragraph 2)

15 The 3 most important things I learned from this connection with *Us* are:

16. The questions I have are

17. A person(s) I know who might find this activity useful is:

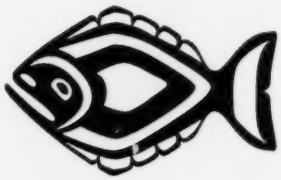
18. At this moment I feel -10_____0_____+10. Describe the feeling:
Uncomfortable Neutral Comfortable

19. Additional thoughts , feelings, reactions, validations, comments:

Reminder: Photocopy this page and complete it each time you discover an attraction to *Us* in a natural area or thing

"Sit down before fact like a little child, and be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly to wherever and whatever abyss Nature leads you, or you shall learn nothing." - **T. H. Huxley**

Chapter 28
Fulfillment



The single blade of grass growing out of a crack in the pavement attracted me because we both had found the energy and support to make room for the fullness of our lives.

I seldom found self-esteem or peace while living in the war zone. I thought I found it when I was a winner, when I was better than others running, grade-wise or because I was free of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and relating to women as sex objects rather than as people. My self-esteem depended upon my competency in academics, athletics, making money, discipline, gaining friends, developing skills, getting good jobs, owning technologies, obtaining degrees, manipulating others and receiving approval from those in power. I gained self-esteem when I demonstrated that I could successfully sustain myself while living in the closet's war zone. But, being disenchanted with the destructive personal and global effects of closet life, I found that whenever I gained some of this kind of self-esteem I also lost some self-respect.

I found that in the war zone, I and others gained true self-esteem by showing ourselves that we could survive successfully in spite of mainstream's unreasonable demands, not because of them. True self-esteem felt like a function of relating happily to *Us,* my true inner nature, not to those bent on conquering it. As I connected more and more with *Us,* I furthered my self-esteem as well as my self-respect and confidence. The more I validated that I and *Us* were identical and could contribute to each other's welfare, the better I felt about myself and my potential. Doing this chapter's and the previous chapter's magical activities lets *Us* contribute to your welfare and become part of all your affairs.

Keeping in mind that natural senses and feelings are as real as rocks, or a pinch, do the following 6-step activity for the next 7 days:

A. Go to a natural area that attracts you.
B. Over seven different days, on each day identify one or more natural things in this area, including sensations, you feel here:

Day 1. One thing(s) you find attractive

Day 2. One thing you like

Day 3. One you appreciate

Day 4. One you think is worthwhile

Day 5. One you think is good

Day 6. One you think is right

Day 7. One thing you love.

C. Write an "is-because statement" about each days things. For example:

1. The (rock) is attractive because (it has the ability to endure amidst erosive forces and change).

2. I like (nurturing) because (it helps other things grow and that makes me feel needed and whole).

3. The _____ is worthwhile because _____.

4. I appreciate _____ because _____.

5. The _____ is good because _____.

6. The _____ is right because _____.

7. I love _____ because _____.

D. Validate that the natural world within and about you is identical, that you are to it as your leg is to your body. Validate that with the exception of the stories and experiences that separate you from the natural world, you and it are one.

E. In light of you and the natural world being identical, substitute yourself for the different natural things you found attractive, worthwhile, liked, appreciated, loved and were good and right. Then read the same sentences as: I am attractive because: I like myself because: I appreciate myself because: I am worthwhile, good or right because: I love myself because. For example, sentence #1 above would read: "I like myself because I have the ability to endure amidst erosive forces and change."

F. Sense how the changed sentence makes you feel. Normally, you will feel joyful and energized because you and nature are identical and your natural attractions *(Us)* have finally connected through language, reason and consciousness. SEVMRATC that feeling. If you sense discomfort, make efforts to find some aspects of your natural self that fit the sentence's description. You know they are there and the description must be true since part of your nature was attracted and connected to itself in this natural area. Sometimes the sentences are metaphors for positive parts of yourself. Search for their meaning. Ask friends to help you find this part of yourself.

Why might these activities leave you feeling unfulfilled? Any discomforting feelings you experience from one of these sentences suggest that you have selected a "nature negative" as an attraction. If you did this, find the hidden positive by using Chapter 21. Discomforting feelings may also arise because part of your sensory inner nature has been devalued, injured or hurt by your past experiences with wranglers. De-energized, it is not in your consciousness which is why you can't readily find it. Try to find just one small example of the sentence fitting some part of your inner nature, have friends help you do this. Often they can see it better than you can. Once found, conscientiously use SEVMRATC to reinforce it. If you consistently use SEVMRATC to reinforce your sentences and inborn natural attractions, you will, in time, gain good feelings from them along with self-esteem.

Participants' reactions:

I feel really good about my sentence.

This activity put these activities all together for me.

I don't feel comfortable about one of my sentences but it helps me identify what I should work on and seek.

This natural area itself gave me more self esteem.

I feel closer to the natural world in people and places now.

This activity is as spiritual as it is scientific.

I think that this is as close to God as I've ever come.

It helps me understand why some people can truly love the land.

Earth and I became more unified because I could definitely sense and feel what held us together.

What a beautiful and powerful means for self discovery.

This city park became a counselor, a healer and a diagnostician too.

It's a tool I can take anywhere because it works with the nature in people and places.

I feel more connected, supported and part of the global life community.

I sense a new confidence because in nature I have found something I can trust and safely rely upon.

That willow tree connected me to myself.

I found myself willing to be co-dependent with Earth. It feels safe and supportive.

Considerations: This activity only works when you validate and trust your oneness with *Us*. It serves as an effective daily healing ritual and works best when you leave a day or more between doing each of the seven different sentence types. The activity helps the senses of *reason* and *language* touch and validate the natural world within and without. Reminder: If you find this activity entraps you in "nature negatives," re-read Chapter 21 and only relate to the attractions hidden behind the discomforts and negatives.

To further personalize this activity, find attractive things in natural areas, including senses and feelings, and determine what qualities or value you see in them: beauty, honesty, integrity, courage, etc. Then, in sentence #5, remove the word *good* and substitute the quality you perceive. Using *beauty* for example: The tree is *beautiful* because_____. Then continue on with the instructions above.

To become better aware of yourself, sometimes it helps to think of your favorite animal. Identify 3 things about that animal which makes it your favorite. Aren't those traits also your stronger traits? To become further aware of how you relate intimately, think about the things you like best about water.

These fulfillment activities can help to establish or heal interpersonal relationships. The persons having the relationship apply the activities to each of the attractions of the inner child (inner nature) they can find in each other.

Food for thought. Whenever our stories excessively separate us from nature, our attractions and attractiveness subside, we hurt, we sense abandonment and our problems increase. Practice the following fulfilling exercise

story which helps you let the wisdom of *Us* work for you in those circumstances:

When you feel unhappy, seek Us in an attractive natural area, thing or person and commit yourself to do the following:

1. *Acknowledge that you always deserve to have good feelings.* (Remember, good feelings indicate ongoing survival, are of, by and from *Us* and its wisdom, and only exist in the present moment.)

2. Make space to sense how and what you feel.

3. Seek good feelings. Choose to blend and follow your safe multiple attractions to the natural world in people, places and things, not just to artifacts or artificial bonds.

4. Keep in mind that fulfilling each natural attraction is always your intention, that you are never intentionally wrong or bad.

5. Let your natural senses of *time* and *belonging to a greater whole* work for you. Remember that your tensions, your "bad feelings," will often be dissolved by your other senses within 3-5 days. Give them this amount of recovery time before taking any actions about which you have conflicts.

6. Think about any negative situation in the light of:

What natural attractions are being thwarted

What is attractive now?

What difference will this incident make ten years from now. Will I actually remember it?

What bad events do I remember from 10 years ago?

Who can I ask to support me in my desire to be happy?"

7. Use SEVMRATC to gain and intensify natural sensory fulfillment. Validate that you have the power to do so. Try to know your inner child in a non-language way.

8. Make time and space to concentrate on connecting with *Us* by being aware of your breathing. Take deep breaths and SEVMRATC the experience. Get in the moment.

9. Repeat activities from this book that have proved helpful.

10. Involve yourself in attractive non-exploitive nature activities such as hiking, organic gardening, bird watching, hunting with a camera, environmental protection groups, meditation, voluntary simplicity, etc.

11. Join and support consensus-governed, open and honest support and/or activity groups. They are usually a peaceful oasis in the war zone.

12. Spend time relating to a plant or animal as if it was the little child within you dressed up as that plant or animal. Enjoy it. Nurture it. Let *Us* in you embrace it and vice versa.

13. Go to an attractive natural area or thing. Change every statement and label involved in your situation into a question. Respond to each question with statements that identify the natural attractions you sense at that moment.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"The mind, in addition to medicine, has the powers to turn the immune system around." - **Jonas Salk**

Chapter 29
Liferaft

They were an adult group. I felt happy for those who said that the most wonderful, supportive experience they ever had was this one. However, it saddened me to realize just how little love they had received during their lifetime for we had only been together for two days.

I remember a beautiful sunny morning in 1937. Billowing, bright white clouds adorned the sky. My father and I at age seven, sat on the steps of a rustic country cabin. For the fourth consecutive weekend, we languidly worked on a huge tangle of string I found in a field. We had important discussions about nothing important as we figured ways to further untangle the string. Finally, when we completed the job, Dad surprised me by producing a kite out of nowhere. We tied it to our immense ball of string and it sailed aloft. The string was so long, and the wind so strong, that the kite just disappeared in the sky. It was invisible, too far away to be seen.

We tied our end of the string to the cabin and I told my friends that the other end was held in the sky by God. I find that often my mind drifts back to that rare memory of Dad and I. It felt like we were womb-mates.

Go to a natural area or thing that attracts you. Sit or lie there for a moment, relax and let your mind take you to the most attractive, supportive time and place in your life, the time you felt most secure and comfortable with people and/or the surroundings. Write down what made that time and place so attractive, which senses and feelings were active:

Section B. Participants' reactions:

I sensed support from many senses.

I felt nurtured there.

The natural world was an important part of it.

My strongest feeling was that I belonged to a greater whole.

Peace and harmony prevailed.

I had strong feelings of community and trust.

It was the kind of feeling I'm looking for now.

That place was here and now.

I call that place and feeling *Us*.

I gained good feelings by bringing that image of the past into the present.

Where is your psychological home on Earth? Participants recognize that many senses were intensely resonating and fulfilled in this situation. Its intensity and diversity provided fulfillment and rewards including the balance of wholeness. Participants SEVMRATC that memory to reinforce it. They think of it as their psychological home, a wrangler-free place to which they, in imagination, can return whenever they so desire.

Where is your physical home on Earth? Sometimes participants steer their lives towards creating situations that awaken and support strong natural feelings and attractions. Participants are encouraged to imagine a future multi-sensory setting that is most attractive and work towards making it a reality for themselves. Usually that setting involves the natural environment.

Practice heeding the callings of natural attractions. When possible, in a safe natural area walk through the area for an hour by moving towards the most attractive calling you find there at any given moment. Let natural attractions lead you to a destination, or select a destination and move towards it by following the most attractive natural thing you experience in that direction, moment by moment. Let this process serve as a liferaft.

How do you catalyze fulfillment? Satisfaction results from comitting ourselves to sensible relationships with society and *Us*. Seek unadulterated nature connections, avoid excessive dependencies on wranglering artifacts. Supporting *Us* and its recuperative powers makes sense; supporting the wrangler and the war against *Us* does not.

Your body is a liferaft, the home of your true inner nature. Responsibly integrating and fulfilling your many natural senses in nature safely keeps that home a war-free zone. Participants in my outdoor education communities engaged in relatively wrangler and war-free relationships with *Us* 24 hours every day for a school year. We lived and learned as if our lives depended upon it for in the long run, they did and still do. Recognize that the healthier *Us* is in your immediate environment, the more attractions and opportunities it offers to gain wholeness. Participating in its recovery assists your recovery. Sometimes participation means risking humiliation, but humility, authentic humanness, is precisely what *Us* in you seeks.

Relating to *Us* is not a medicine, rather the process embraces the whole of life while dealing with wranglers and an ongoing war. It is a liferaft, a field hospital of community building through natural attractions. If the process always feels comfortable, it's probably not happening for *Us* feels anxious, not comfortable, in a war zone. Our long term liferaft is a restored, healthy *Us* and its strength and wisdom to flow with its fluctuations.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

BECOMING THE LIFERAFT

1. It has been said that the natural world is "Perfection looking at itself in a mirror" and that"Wherever you may go the least plant may bring you the clear rembembrance of the Creator." (St. Basil). When we perceive a negative or discomfort in an intact natural thing or area, what the natural world mirror usually reflects is a disconnection from Us within ourselves, not a flaw in the mirror. The following activities enable us to enter the mirror and let Us correct our abbertions.

Teach your senses of reason and language to trust the mirroring phenomenon. Go to an intact natural area.

> In your imagination, as strongly as you can, feel various emotions like hurt, mad, glad, sad, joy and scared. Once you genuinely feel some discomforting emotion, note what catches your attention in the natural area. It usually reflects that emotion. Keep focused on it and, over time, let other aspects of the attraction call to you. As they awaken other natural senses in you, your discomfort begins to fade.

2. When we seek the unadulterated perfection of Us in a natural area, it often mirrors our internal natural sensory disconnections. Not accidently, specific natural attractions appear attractive in a natural area at any given moment depending upon our conscious or unconscious moods, needs or problems. For example: While sensing a natural area, the grandeur of soft, peaceful, billowing cloud formations attract Bill. However, following an argument with his wife, he finds that the discomforts of a thistle's spines attract him. Alarmed by his story that he's that he's attracted to pain, the activity teaches Bill a new story, one saying "Follow your other natural attractions to Us." Soon, good feelings from new attractions gently guide him and his wife to the fullness of the thistle's and his own natural integrity. He again senses Us, the adaptability and enduring attractions that he, the thistle and his wife hold in common. By this process, incorporating contact with Us makes our discomforts into positives and possibilities. Through the following activity, you may enhance it:

> When uncomfortable, locate on the sensory checklist (page 62-63) the natural senses you feel are being blocked, hurt or severed. then go to a natural area and find attractions there for these senses. For example, What there is nurturing? Compassionate? Community? Your place? With the Self Evaluation Reactionaire, SEVMRATC (page 97) each of these attractions. With what person or persons do you also fulfill these natural feelings?

3. Discover how words act as perceptual filters.

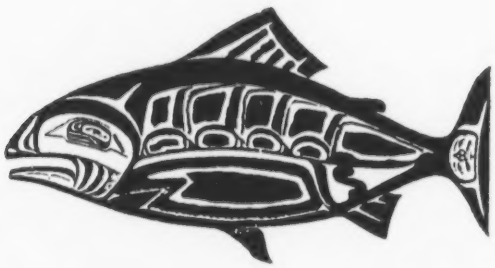
> With a group of participants, by consensus, find an attractive word or concept that you all feel is of common interest. Go to a natural area and by consensus, find a natural scene there that by consensus you agree the word describes. For example, find examples of one or more of the 53 senses, or a situation in nature that could be labeled as courage, dignity, information, excitement etc.

Use activity 3 to relieve you of discomfort. Find a present aggrevation, discomfort or question then, in a natural area find an immediate attraction.
Share the natural attraction or sensation with others.
From all the attractions brought in by group members, by consensus select one.
Go to a natural area and use that word in activity 3 above.

Section Six

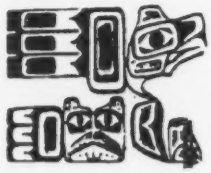
INTERPRETATION, THEORY AND POTENTIAL

Discoverving Problems, Solutions and Unity



"Viewed from the moon, the astonishing thing about the Earth is that it is alive...Beneath the moist, gleaming membrane of bright blue sky, it has the self contained look of a live creature full of information, marvelously skilled in handling the sun." **- Lewis Thomas**

Chapter 30
Secret Life



Although it mainly consists of rocks, how could it be that Earth is dead if it is our global life support community, our mother, our other body, the womb of life as we know it?

Seven years after I started my outdoor program, my attraction to the wisdom and beauty of nature continued to increase daily. I became aware that any human being could trust and feel their unity with Earth once they fully acknowledged their non-verbal connections with the natural world. But, the war against *Us* that raged within and about me had wrangled me. I felt abnormal about my love of nature. I thought of myself as a freak that loved rocks. How could I even relate to rocks? Rocks were dead. What did I and a rocky planet have in common? What abnormality allowed it to enchant me? Even today, if you stress me enough about my program, these wranglered feelings begin to re-awaken. But once I found an answer to these questions, I realized why so many of the world's greatest leaders spent large amounts of time in natural areas. It explained why Moses met Yahweh on the mountain, not downtown, why Jesus spent so much time in the wilderness.

This chapter helps you experience a crucial point in my life and yours. It allows the dead to rise from the grave. Once I was able to see life everywhere, I could critically validate the universality of my natural senses and of *Us*.

Go to a natural area or thing and spend one hour inventorying what is taking place there. Identify how and where this same thing is taking place in yourself and affecting you, and/or vice-versa. *Write your findings here:*

Section B. Participants' Reactions:

Plants breathe, I breathe.

I move, rocks move.

Water cycles through me and everything else.

Rocks interact, I interact.

Crystals grow, I grow.

Soil nourishes, I nourish.

Atoms attract and are attracted, me too.

I reproduce, minerals reproduce.

Birds fly, I jump.

I desire to be, so does everything else.

I love to relate, oxygen loves to relate.

Water changes, I change.

Roots need diversity, so do I.

My life is a result and celebration of the lives of other beings.

The desire *to be* of trees, rocks, and dinosaurs is alive and well within me.

I'm alive, Earth is alive.

I'm not old enough to reproduce, but that doesn't mean I'm not alive.

Is *Us* attempting to let you know about itself? I learned to acknowledge the natural world's sensory relationships when, in 1966, I was caught in a freak thunderstorm deep in Grand Canyon's inner gorge. The extreme flooding, cooling and erosion there cracked my 20th Century mental walls and prejudices about life and the land. Blood-red muddy waters flowing down 1000 foot canyon cliffs and across the land gave the illusion that the entire landscape was alive. That short indelible impression has remained in me. On that day, at the age of 36, I associated Planet Earth and aliveness. I soon recognized that Earth acts like a living organism which for eons has organized itself to stay alive in the solar system.

I became aware that to survive, the living Earth, like you and I, must sense and deal with becoming too hot, cold, salty, depleted, stagnant, stressed, dysfunctional and toxified. To achieve this living equilibrium, the Planet's biology, geology and chemistry help it adapt to changes in the solar system and itself. They act as its metabolism. Night-day, night-day, night-day is the planet's energizing heartbeat which resonates with the cold-hot, cold-hot, cold-hot of polar-equator temperature differences. Geologically created, warm evaporating inland seas serve as Earth's kidneys; air and water its bloodstream. To the benefit of life as we know it, plants, animals, clouds and atmospheric composition edit Earth's relationship with the sun and cosmos so the global life community never becomes to hot, cold, dry or radioactive. In congress, all aspects of Earth, including people, compose the planet-sized intelligence and biological consciousness of this wise, gigantic, self-regulating plant cell, our global home.

Over time, I recognized that Earth acts like a growing fertilized egg of the universe, whose life normally approaches perfection. In this perspective, natural attractions serve as Organism Earth's spirit, nervous system, and mentality as well as the roots of our own.

Can there be scientific facts about *Us* in your daydreams and fantasies? Recent scientific findings validate what I long ago sensed about our planet that day. They show that life as we know it will succumb to overwhelming chemical and physical forces if life occupies a planet without organizing, regulating and regenerating it. Studies indicate that Planet Earth's biology and geology are tightly coupled as a single indivisible physiological process. Not surprisingly, Mother Earth, our solar system womb, shows every sign of being totally alive (54).

Today, our wranglered nature-separated training and relationships deteriorate Earth's life. The war against *Us* has put Earth and us at risk. This will not change until we can unashamedly embrace the natural world. We delude ourselves if we think that without strong fulfilling emotional bonds to our Earth Mother and *Us*, we will be able

to make the difficult changes necessary for a healthy sustainable future. The cigarette smoking 30% of our population clearly demonstrate this point. Without strong bonds to all of life, we've been wrangled to risk death from smoking rather than risk the abandonment pain that cigarettes or other destructive dependencies tranquilize. The following activity has helped me and others deal with our global-local-personal crises:

Imagine yourself as a member of a group of tourists, picnic baskets in hand, driving into a beautiful cathedral. Place a check mark next to each of the following things you think you would do there:

( ) Chop up the pews for firewood.

( ) Roast hot dogs on the holy candles.

( ) Strew litter throughout the sacred area.

( ) Carve graffiti, fire bullets and throw hatchets into the columns

( ) Excrete in the holy water after washing your dishes in it.

( ) Smash the Crucifix and statues of Saints with your vehicle.

( ) Tell the Archbishop to clean up the mess.

( ) Declare that your actions are legitimate because the Constitution of the United States gives you property rights.

Write your reactions here:

Participant's Reactions:

No participant has ever said that they would do any of these things to a sacred cathedral because *the very nature of a sacred place culturally awakens natural senses which prevent its wranglered destruction from happening.* Even during wartime we seldom bomb enemy cathedrals. For people(s) who treasure their good feelings from fulfilled natural senses, Planet Earth -the natural world within and about us- also becomes sacred, a cathedral, part of their spirituality. They think with their heart, they actively protect *Us,* In turn, *Us,* embraces and supports these people(s).

How much better all of life might be today if Earth's self-regulating interplay of senses helped to balance our irresponsible runaway lives. Imagine what a different world it would be if we interconnected and fulfilled all our natural senses including *community, place, trust, compassion, self, joining a greater whole, aesthetics, thankfulness, belonging, nurturing* and *being part of a greater being.*

Since our civilization's beginnings, our prejudice against ***Us*** *has made us ignore our own wisdom as expressed by clearer minds. Write your reactions to the following after each statement:*

The God of love emerged to create the Earth. Before, all was silent, bare and motionless."

- Early Greek Myth

"The heart has its reasons which reason does not know"

- Pascal

"The place on which you are standing is holy ground."

- Letters

"Wherever you may go, the least plant may bring you clear remembrance of the Creator."

- St. Basil

"By beauty, the sensuous man is brought back to the world of sense."

- Frederich Von Schiller

"Never does nature say one thing and wisdom another"

- Jovenel

"One's real, most intimate self pervades the universe and all other beings. The mountains and the sea and the stars are part of one's body."

- W. Harmon

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends to do otherwise."

- Aldo Leopold

Write any final reactions here:

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

***"All that is hidden, all that is plain, I have come to know, instructed by Wisdom who designed them all."* - Wisdom: 7, 15**

Chapter 31
The Nature of Personality

In our sessions, we never discussed his problems. Rather, I asked that he let 5 different imagined animals represent his 5 different basic desires. When he was able to get each of the imaginary animals to freely talk with the others, he had healed.

Since 1947 I have worked as a teacher and counselor with many different age groups and settings. I have watched people successfully resolve their personal conflicts and dysfunctions, as well as their conflicts with others. Without exception, every improvement I have seen has come about from the awakening and strengthening of natural attractions within and between people. Most of our society fails to acknowledge and incorporate this observation simply because most of us have wranglered to hold deep prejudices against nature. We give our cultural creativity and wranglers credit for the natural wisdom of *Us*. We blame nature for our difficulties and applaud ourselves for solving them.

I find that each of our healing discoveries are, in reality, discoveries that let *Us* work its wisdom. For example, Sir Alexander Flemming neither invented or discovered penicillin. The attractions and wisdom of *Us* that exist in a fungus created penicillin to protect that fungus from bacteria. Where in our society is honor or applause given to that fungus? Write a grant to build a large memorial statue to honor a fungus and see whether you get funded or committed.

Identify 3 different personal problems, past or present, that are of interest to you. Using the list of natural senses and attractions on page 61, note which natural senses have been disconnected or injured to cause the problem and must be rejuvenated or compensated for in order to resolve it. *Write your responses here:*

Section B. Participants' responses:

I felt isolated. I used alcohol as a social lubricant because it tranquilized my inhibitions. I was inhibited because my parents were extroverts and I always compared myself to them and lost. My senses of *community* and *belonging* had been injured.

Ann was bulemic because she wanted to be physically attractive to others. She felt people didn't like her. She got that notion from her parents who seemed to like her sister more than they did her. Her sister was a dancer. Ann's senses of nurturing, self, music, rhythm and motion had been hurt.

Charley was into drugs because he was new in town and the only people he met used drugs. To feel comfortable, he used them too and now he couldn't stop. He had lost his sense of place, community, and reason.

Sally constantly needed a boy friend because she felt she had nothing else worthwhile. No matter how badly her boy friend treated her, it was better than feeling like a zombie. She seemed to have no attractions except sexual ones, and they attracted her into relationships that exploited her.

What relationship does your personality have to *Us?* The natural role of personality is to make us attractive in order that we might make attractive, stabilizing natural connections with other people and species. Such connections help achieve enjoyable, balanced survival for the common good. Balanced survival always feels good because it is relatively conflict free. It is good for the whole of life as well as the whole individual.

We usually consider personality without recognizing its relationship to the natural world. This will continue until we train our sense of reason to perceive every person and personality as being as a unique natural knot that forms itself in a loosely connected, flowing stream of universal attraction chains. These chains are the 53 natural sense groups which are diverse expressions of *Us.* Each personality knot ties the senses together, uniting the global life stream, making it stronger and giving it additional ways of being (diversity). Personality strengths and weaknesses result from the amount of support or disconnection each sense receives during our formative knot-developing years.

Our personality is a natural history of our personal sensory relationships. Our wranglered separation from the natural world weakens many senses. Our sense of *consciousness* remains aware of our supported, more vibrant senses. Although these senses may be closet-bonded, they become our special feelings of self, of our desire to be. We experience abandoned senses as hurts or injuries, as negative senses of self. We attempt to keep them out of consciousness for fear of experiencing their pain. Our sense of self usually consists of the senses that play and/or are supported in our consciousness at any given moment. *Self* changes as environments and situations change. Our deepest self is our awareness of the way that we sense and feel *Us* in ourselves.

Often when we see certain characteristics in others, they irritate us because we too have lived or are living through the ordeals that produce such characteristics. Our irritation arises from subconsciously sensing the wranglers and painful abandonment which gave us these characteristics. We try to avoid the potential of having to live through that abandonment again as we relate to an injured, de-sensitized person.

Injured senses pass on their injury. An injury to a natural sense results in pain and desensitization. The pain demands attention, no matter the consequences. The desensitization results in insensitive disrespect for that same sense in other people. For example, a person with a wranglered, hurt sexual sense often expresses themselves by sexually wranglering and assaulting other people. The other person's sexual hurt falls on dead sexual sensitivities of the assaulter. This phenomenon blindly passes the original wranglerism and sexual hurt from parent to child, generation after generation. Each generation swears they will not wrangle their children the way they were wrangled as children, yet too often they can't recognize or control their injured, frustrated, desensitized sexual feelings.

Every mentor, therapy and therapist that achieves responsible results ultimately does so because they have enabled their client's reasoning to re-connect and rejuvenate one or more of their other natural senses. New energies from each rejuvenated sense improve a person's total well being.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"Speak to the Earth and it shall teach thee." - Job 12:8

Chapter 32
Project NatureConnect

I spent years going through 25 years of slides, writings, and memories, and identifying the significant experiences in my years outdoors. Then I designed backyard activities and workshops that let anybody access the heart of these experiences.

In theory, I could retire right now and disengage myself from the frustrations of work and hope. I have not retired, because helping people embrace *Us* and vice versa is too attractive for me to give it up. Joy is even more rewarding when it is shared. Denying fulfillment of my attractions to *Us* makes me uncomfortable.

I and others find that helping people experience *Us* is as much a part of *Us* and life, as are food and water. *Us* is life connecting with itself. In this life, once you find it, you really can't stop supporting it without feeling or being dead. In the next life you have no choice; you always support *Us* because in the next life the Law of *Us*, not our culture, governs. The following activity helps you sense this in yourself.

Write your responses after each question and exercise:

Does it make sense for you to feel peace and happiness?

Does it make sense for people to feel a global-local-personal unity?

Does it make sense for you and others to experience *Us?*

Does it make sense to support the wrangler and the ongoing war against *Us*?

If you had a choice, what kind of life and world would you want for yourself?

Select one or two of your favorite activities from this book and teach them to somebody who would appreciate them. *Write here what you thought and felt about doing this.*

Section B. Participants' Reactions is found at the end of this chapter.

Are there ways that you can safely support *Us* ? It is insanity to knowledgeably wrangle and wage war against *Us*, our life support system within and about us. *Practicing our destructive closeted ways to obtain love is our problem, not its solution.* This manual's activities are part of World Peace University's *Project NatureConnect* (Appendix B). The project's purpose is to restore people and the environment by enabling people to intimately know *Us* and thereby gain its wisdom.

People naturally change in order to gain pleasure and avoid pain. In Project NatureConnect, participants learn to experience the natural world around, between and within them. They enjoy and share its sensory pleasure, balance and wisdom. They abhor its pain from our wrangled abandonment of it and war against it. These feelings guide participants to compassionate, socially and environmentally sound relationships. Project NatureConnect increases anyone's potential to be helpful to others and *Us*. In return, *Us* nurtures their balance.

The intelligent peaceful wisdom of *Us* flows within us. We learn it by learning the art of placing the natural world between opposing forces, including the forces that create our inner conflicts. This lets *Us* responsibly resolve our conflicts. In this role, *Us* has the expertise from five billion years of experience with diversity, sensory evolution and interactions on this planet. Creating win-win situations at all levels is how *Us* maintains the natural world's optimum of diversity and survival. That's why the natural world has no garbage. Project NatureConnect activities enable us to tap this wisdom.

Our culture's crusade against *Us* makes it irresponsible for us not to sensibly take charge of what we experience and what our lives become. Otherwise, because we are natural beings, society exploits *Us* within us us as a natural resource. Responsibility consists of getting out of destructive wrangler relationships by intimately re-connecting to the natural world's attractive strengths in yourself, the environment and in others. Additional Project NatureConnect activities can further assist you in reaching this goal.

Because the Project feeds from humanity's foundations in the natural world, it grounds and unifies, rather than polarizes, its participants. They discover that no matter their cultural, economic or social differences, survivalwise, feelingfully, they can support each other because they are of the same persuasion and in the same boat, Planet Earth. The activities unify them because they emanate from survival processes and needs of *Us* that we hold in common, not from cultural factionalism. The process allows participants to be open and honest with their feelings because nature is non-judgemental. They can use the process anytime, anyplace because *Us* always exists within and around us.

Project NatureConnect's activities let contact with nature rejuvenate and fulfill many hurting abandoned natural sensory connections. Each natural sense feeds on hugs from the natural world that exists in the natural environment and in people. The activities catalyze long-term bonds between nature within and without. They let simple, genuine, direct natural sensory fulfillment replace our inner child's wranglered, painful abandonment memories. They help us see and feel how our closeted personal history has supported or abandoned our natural senses. They disclose our closeting's stressful short and long term effects.

People(s) who live in balance with themselves, others and the natural environment have sustained most of their natural senses, or have rejuvenated them. They commune with the inner child in other people and with the natural environment. They more fully enjoy life because, to them, natural attractions are trustable and enjoyable, the more the merrier. They freely, responsibly choose and blend many natural attractions at any given moment. They resonate in these self-regulating natural blends. Accordingly, they live sensible, sensitive lives in balance with and in support of the whole of life for they know *Us* as *Us* knows itself. They are demonstration models for Lawrence Leshan who said "There is no sharp dividing line between self-repair and self realization."

The hope for personal and global recovery lies in those of us who let *Us* teach, who respect and respond to Its congress of sensory callings. Project NatureConnect seeks, trains, networks and supports such individuals as teachers, counselors and facilitators. It empowers them with published sensory explorations, ethics and role plays; postures, writings, associations; transferences, projections analyses; imageries, games, personifications; readings, reinforcements and writings. The Project also offers guidebooks, training manuals, workshops, lesson plans, and support groups.

Hope arises from Project NatureConnect activities. To our true inner nature, they are the great American dream. The activities can be used as responsible rituals and ethics. They mandate our culturally honed senses of *reason*

and *language* to offset the work of wranglers. They catalyze lasting bonds to natural attractions in people and the natural world. They help us love ourselves, Earth, and each other because the wisdom of balanced life feels good.

Section B: Participants' and Observers' Reactions:

The activities work, they move students. I see significant improvement in their self-esteem and value. They find something outside themselves that is actually a truth within themselves.

What a delight! It's a state of the art learning process, a breakthrough for humanity and the environment. My wilderness participants take it home with them and continue to benefit by using it there.

My street gang provided me with the family, self-esteem, community, tranquilizers and security I never had. As I learned to more responsibly fulfill these needs on my wilderness trip, I lost my dependency on the gang. I became part of a larger, more peaceful community.

I was depressed and suicidal. These activities make life worthwhile. They've kept me alive.

A powerful convincing approach. Its new dimensions captured my imagination. It gave me hope.

My interpersonal relationships are healthier, my environmental career is on the rise and my commitment and love for the planet is still strong. You cannot stop the process.

Project NatureConnect is an exhilarating, humbling experience. I found new attitudes and commitments. I've become an advocate.

I spent wonderful hours playing with our homeroom aquarium, using hand lenses to watch its amazing plants and animals, to see oxygen bubbles grow in sunlight. Before I became enamored with the natural world, I felt ungrounded. Most things seemed expendable, including the environment and me.

What a wonderful discovery. Its sensory literacy puts into words many feelings I've had since I was a kid.

It connects. It gives a voice to God and nature's wisdom and wholeness.

Project NatureConnect gives added value to natural areas. The natural world is my ally. It seems so wrong to injure it within or around me. This workshop touched my creative side, renewed my spirit.

It is fun and exciting. The simplicity of material that could have such major consequences impressed me.

The activities have introduced my inner child to its parents in the natural world. They suggest that my "inner child" is my true inner nature. Now, it feels even more connected, nurtured, whole and important. I've become more aware of it, I value it as part of me.

The activities gave me new reasons to trust some of my gut feelings about the health and welfare of the environment and myself.

I committed myself to using these nature-connecting activities daily. I was motivated to do so because I was slightly overweight, my previously injured back, knee and ankle hurt, my cholesterol and PSA blood tests were high and I felt down. Were these symptoms of disconnection from *Us?* Within 5 months, my pain was reduced, my blood tests were normal and I'd lost 15 pounds too.

How important Project NatureConnect's guidebooks, workshops and activities have been to us. Its straightforward, unembroidered perceptions are as refreshing and clear as a mountain lake. It's a joy, for it unifies rather than polarizes. It effectively speaks to modern problems with modern knowledge, skills and

language. **Nancy McMinnon,** The Gowland Foundation, Victoria, British Columbia.
Project NatureConnect allows the natural world to nurture a responsible growing edge of culture. **Bill Hammond,** Director of Curriculum Services, Florida Advisory Council on Environmental Education.

Young people need Project NatureConnect experiences to learn environmentally responsible citizenship. I have made Project NatureConnect workshops available on school time for teachers and for students Grades 4-12. **Dr. Daniel Levine,** Superintendent of Schools, Lopez Island, Washington.

A worthwhile, thought-provoking hard look at our relationships with Planet Earth as a living organism. **Marshal Case,** Director of Education, National Audubon Society.

A solid approach that applies the same consistent attitudes to living with people as it does to living with nature. **Environmental Education Report**

If education means learning to better understand mankind and the problems of a tremendously complicated planet, then this is education in the finest sense of the word. **Robert Binnewies,** Superintendent, Yosemite National Park.

Valuable therapeutically and educationally. An in-depth search for real answers. I cannot praise it highly enough. **Mrs. J. Watson Thomas,** Psychotherapist.

Mike Cohen has instilled in his students an awareness of nature and its workings that few will come close to in years of concentration. **Jim Hart, Naturalist.**

These young people learned to deal with what seems to be universal situations and feelings. **Mr. and Mrs Irving Pollitt,** Counselors.

Education is a culture in itself, affecting those who pass through with definitions, concepts, life style, a reason and way of living that makes sense. Mike's makes an awful lot of sense, hangs together beautifully. **John Seeger,** Principal.

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

"All organized beings steer toward the greatest measure of well being." **- Albert Schweitzer**

Chapter 33
Conclusions

There is no end. There is just a continuation of growing and being in different ways, and, at death, being in different beings.

Because our relationship to the natural world is like our leg's relationship to our body, the war against nature rages within us as well as around us. It dehabilitates portions of our being. Since the beginning of our culture's history and thinking, we have falsely believed that our conquest of nature makes our survival possible. Only recently have we discovered the error in this thinking. It has proven to violate our personal health as well as the health of the global life community. It deteriorates our minds, bodies and planet.

Our wranglering, nature-separated indoor lives rip apart our natural bonds to nature's ways. Wranglering injures nature within and about us Our closeted-from-nature lives create emotionally protective closets within our personality. In these closets, we hide from potentially irritating sensory contact and emotional persecution. Our bonds to the structure of our mental closets prevent us from leaving these closets without un-bonding from them. To leave involves the risk and hurt of breaking our closet-bonds. Breaking them means again psychologically enduring abandonment and pain of detachment, the same pain that we endured as we detached from *the natural world.*

As our erroneous cultural stories and thinking conquer nature, they painfully assault and abandon the nature within us (our inner child). Our personal, social and environmental disorders arise from this estrangement. We fail to establish responsible relationships because too often that process hooks expectations or rejections which trigger our childhood pain and abandonment. Our fear of this occurrence creates the apathy and non-participation which disables us.

Enjoinment (enjoyment) reverses abandonment. Bonding with natural areas reduces abandonment fears. I find that just as disconnecting from nature produces abandonment pain and dysfunctions; re-connecting with nature produces joy, recovery and wholeness. I have shown that in order to achieve wholeness while living on Planet Earth, we must physically and spiritually unify themselves with *Us*, the whole of Earth which includes people, places and ecosystems. The activities used to accomplish this goal are simple, time-tested paths to unity.

Effectively connecting with natural attractions creates lasting mental, physical and environmental health. The process energizes passion, spirit and our commitments to get out of our closet and into wholeness. As the process safely connects our thinking to energies from and for a healthy planet, it disconnects us from the hurtful ways of personal ills.

For most people, connecting with the whole of*Us* is a very strange concept. Most people believe they can't truly communicate with the natural world because it neither speaks nor understands English. Our experiences show that by embracing *Us* we not only bond to Earth and gain its energy and wisdom, we also learn its "language." Some call the process scientific, others deem it psychological or spiritual. No matter the label, few can deny its positive lasting effects.

Our society's long standing cultural prejudice against nature falsely rejects bonding to *Us* as an imperative for

recovery and responsibility. Yet we do know that strong bonds to the natural environment catalyze environmentally and socially responsible societies and individuals. It is always our inherent emotional-spiritual passion for all of life that motivates us to support the natural world, each other and ourselves. We seldom recognize that all of life inherits a sense of belonging to a greater whole.

Our ability to sense and feel is directly of, by and from the natural world. Awakening and heeding natural senses and feelings leads to healthy fulfillments for Earth's needs and our own. We find that by using Project NatureConnect activities and concepts, any committed person can enjoy this process.

The basic desire *to be* is a universal attraction/love that catalyzes healthy natural relationships at all levels. Abandonment is disconnection, the opposite of beingness, and disconnection is death as we know it. The counseling process attempts to deal with the effects of this threat to our inner nature/child. However, counseling procedures usually take place indoors. Philosophically they often condone our closeted ways because most people's extreme indoor upbringing has subdued their awareness of *Us*.

Any recovery process worth the name gives the sense of *reason* the space to make reasonable, nature-connective choices. But *reason* can not successfully do so if the choice to gain fulfillment from nature is no choice because it awakens abandonment wranglers and pain. Although recovery may make our destructive closeted life more palatable, if it's not environmentally and socially responsible it's much like drinking martinis to tranquilize one's depression about being an alcoholic.

My experiences in natural areas demand that we practice a responsible form of recovery. Since the underlying source of our problems is our estrangement from *Us*, the natural world, the obvious solution is to re-connect with *Us*, when possible. Re-connection makes the natural world in backyards, parks or wilderness become a partner and catalyst in the recovery process. In natural areas Mother Nature does what she does best. She thrives by peacefully integrating diversity including the diverse warring factions of our closeted inner child. In the natural world, nature and nurture are synonymous for they are *Us*. By choosing to let *Us* nurture us, we give added value to natural areas. This may prove to be their salvation as well as our own.

Because much of our cultural story is one of conquest of the natural world in people and places, the responsibility of *reason* becomes to seek, create and enter long-term fulfilling relationships which connect with and support *Us*. Connecting with *Us* in people is part of the process, connecting with the wind, hills and stars is all of it (William O. Douglas).

Participant's Self-guide: Write here what for you are the three most important points of this chapter:

APPENDIX

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***These references are listed to credit that points made in this manual have been reviewed and published by journals in various disciplines. References other than the author's further discuss the identified topic. Reference numbers containing the letter A (i.e. 51A) indicate that these citings have been added since the 1992 edition of* Well Mind, Well Earth**

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Appendix A

The World Peace University

A Non-Governmental Organization of the United Nations

Founded in 1984 as a non-profit educational corporation, The World Peace University of Eugene, Oregon dedicates itself to education that catalyzes peace on Earth through peace with Earth. The need for such learning is great, for education excluding this vital factor too often programs us to create the problems we now face.

The University's goal is to educate those who desire to co-create a world where peace is the way of life, where there is food sufficiency, where environmental balance exists, where social justice prevails and where an individual achieves the highest degree of self-realization within a community of cooperation.

The University offers the following programs to the public:

Off-campus courses, workshops and conferences.

Guided core peace study internships for credit.

Rainforest preservation-through-ownership projects.

Radio For Peace International, short-wave broadcasting that provides peace intercommmunication for the global human family.

Project NatureConnect: Department of Integrated Ecology Training Institute *Dare To Recover Your Nature* program..

World Peace University Press: publication of appropriate books and articles for peace.

The international, shortwave linked Sister Schools project.

World Peace University, Box 10869, Eugene, Oregon 97440 (503) 741-1794

Appendix B

Project NatureConnect Summary

Project NatureConnect is an outreach program of The World Peace University, Department of Integrated Ecology chaired by Professor Michael J. Cohen, Ed.D. The Project offers new and different nature-catalyzed relationship tools. It perceives a person and personality as a human desire *to be* that diversely maintains and expresses itself through 53 sensory attractions.

Project NatureConnect:

Encompasses many disciplines and ways of thinking.
Validates unmediated sensory experiences in classrooms, backyards or backcountry as scientific facts.
Enables us to know *Us*, the natural world, as *Us* knows itself.
Identifies our cultural isolation and demeaning of natural senses as a source of our apathy and our personal and environmental problems .
Acknowledges that the global life community, like a living organism, survives by intelligently organizing, preserving and regenerating itself.
Recognizes that with the exception of our destructive cultural stories, people and the natural world are identical.
Shows from research and experience that people biologically inherit not five, but over 53 natural senses that in concert intelligently govern the natural world including ourselves.
Affirms that sensitivity to natural senses is the way the natural world works within and about us.
Demonstrates that sensing and validating attractions in the natural world creates powerful moments that let *Us* teach.
Observes that excessive separation from the natural environment evokes abandonment feelings and injures natural senses and bonds.
Finds that alienating or injuring natural senses creates pain, fear, apathy, and motivation for destructive relationships.
Establishes that information alone does not change relationships with sensory pacifiers and band-aids. Motivation does.
Gives added value to natural areas by showing them to be wise, interdisciplinary, experiential classrooms that motivate, thereby reducing apathy.
Unifies by validating and trusting senses that all species share.
Rejuvenates responsible motivation and action by reconnecting natural senses to the natural world.
Enables recreation to catalyze re-creation and responsible change.
Builds ethics, concepts and language from our oneness with the natural world.
Grounds people in the lasting survival power and wisdom of the global life community, rather than in the exploitive frailties of our society.
Emulates the social processes of responsible individuals and societies.
Distributes a self-empowering field guide to activities which make connecting and bonding with the natural attractions possible anytime, anyplace.
Enlists counselors as new, potent environmental education cadre.
Enhances sensory environmental and inner nature literacy.
Accepts responsible spirituality as part of recovery, counseling, education and environmental responsibility..
Catalyzes personal and global balance.
Improves academics, self-esteem and interpersonal relationships.
Reinforces and brings greater holism to the steps in recovery and restoration.

Appendix C

Do not detach. Photocopy this page and return it to:

Project NatureConnect,
THE WORLD PEACE UNIVERSITY
Box 4112, Roche Harbor, WA 98250 (206) 378-6313

I am a_____(profession or student major) interested in: ( )more deeply connecting with Nature. ( )training workshops and courses. ( )independent facilitator positions and livelihoods. ( )training tapes. ( )introductory videos. ( )lesson plans. ( )establishing local programs. ( )Advisory Board membership. ( )public relations. ( )research projects. ( )other -please explain. ( )I have enclosed a resume.

The World Peace University is a non-profit organization that largely sustains itself through volunteer personnel and financial contributions to our activities and publications. **The 1993 prices quoted below are our actual printing, development, handling and mailing costs.** *For each publication you would like to receive, please consider making an additional financial contribution to Project NatureConnect.* Thank you.

Enclosed is my total contribution of $_____for the items checked below: (Make checks payable to *Project NatureConnect.*) This Manual;

( ) ___Copies of this manual's Introductory Preview **Green in Green** $3.00 pp.

( ) ___Copies of Project NatureConnect Ooverview article **Integrated Ecology: The Revolutionary Process of Counseling With Nature.** $3.00 pp.

( )_____additional copies of the combined companion volumes **Well Mind, Well Earth** and **The Field Guide To Connecting With Nature**. Our cost $39.95 pp. $48.80 pp Canadian

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The Revolutionary Process of Counseling and Educating With Nature

Most personal stress arises from our estrangement from nature's wisdom and unconditional love within and about us. Our stress results in our hurt, apathy, and destructive habits. *Well Mind, Well Earth* addresses this major problem, this great challenge to the psychological and educational community. The manual offers 97 unique nature-connecting activities that evolve from thirty years of educational research in natural areas. Dramatically, the activities reverse our estrangement and its negative effects as they renew over 49 inherent natural senses and fulfillments. The process awakens our repressed natural feelings of love and understanding. It fills the voids which fuel our problems. It gives natural areas added value as rejuvenators of our biological and spiritual integrity.

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The program gave me new reasons to trust my gut feelings about the health of the environment and myself.

A solid approach that applies the same consistent attitudes to living with people as it does to living with nature. This program allows the natural world to nurture a responsible growing edge of culture.

About The Author:

Michael J. Cohen, Ed.D. researched and coordinates *Project NatureConnect*, an outreach program of the World Peace University where he is a professor and Chairs the Department of Integrated Ecology. For 28 years, he founded and directed consensus governed, degree granting, environmental outdoor education programs for the Trailside Country School, Lesley College, and the National Audubon Society. He consistently lives, teaches and researches in natural areas and has written over 55 articles and 8 books including *How Nature Works* and the award winning *Field Guide to Connecting With Nature.*

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